

A ONE-ACT PLAY BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE DEVIL."

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THE SMART SET

A
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OF

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IN
THIS
NUMBER:

Ellen Heney,
Elliott Flower,
Emery Pottle,
James Barnes,
Franz Molnar,
Herbert Kaufman,
Thomas L. Masson,
Mabel Wood Martin,
E. Phillips Oppenheim.

LONDON

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PARIS

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THE APRIL SMART SET

Some funny letters come to this office. We'd like to issue a volume some time—"Weird Epistles to Weary Editors"; it would make delicious reading.

No protest this—far from it! They're welcome contributions; they enliven things, make the dull editorial grind take on moments of mad, giddy joy. The only drawback is we can't publish them—some, being anonymous, we can't even reply to.

One letter came in verse form—we wrestled mightily with a rhyming dictionary and sent a more or less poetic reply. It evidently got over—we heard no protests. Another wrote: "I've a bet of a dinner for four that you won't publish the enclosed"—to which we responded succinctly: "Dear Sir: You win." One author of a very clever little skit on married life, which portrayed a damaging lot of things a husband is not supposed to know, wrote: "I sign this by a *nom de plume*. I am married and don't want to start anything." And then came, just the other day, a letter to the Editor beginning this wise: "You dear, naughty man: I think you have nerve altering the shape of my baby's nose without leave"! This last certainly was a flabbergaster—till we found out that the "baby"—a child of the brain presumably—was a short sketch which had been published with slight editorial alterations.

And we'd like to make the acquaintance of the breezy correspondent who accused us of having a sanctimonious bee in our editorial hive and uttered sundry jests anent old plush table covers—also the writer from San Mateo, California, who asked for two issues a month—said thirty days was too long to wait. Can't do it just now, old chap—but here's what's coming next month.

"The Mask of Truth," a complete novel by Katharine Metcalf Roof. A story of an international marriage that was unique in some ways. The scene is laid in and about New York, and the characters are drawn with the skill and delicacy for which this author is noted.

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"Bound," by Susan Keating Glaspell, a story of artistic Paris and the circumstances that influence some people's lives.

"In a Vest Pocket Garden," by Annie E. P. Searing. A love story of Americans in Italy—with a very unexpected dénouement.

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THE SMART SET

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UNEXPLAINED

By JAMES BARNES

THE voice of the marker shouting, "Play! Play!" echoed monotonously through the racquet court, and the continual slapping of the ball as it darted about the angles of the walls showed that the two players were above the average.

At the end of the second game the marker called the score peremptorily. There was some slight applause, and one of the young men stopped for a moment and wiped the perspiration from his face. The other spun his racquet carelessly in his hand, and glanced up at the little group of watchers that leaned over the rail of the gallery.

Charlie Gardner, the youngest and very latest member of the club, called down, without moving his elbows:

"Rattling good game you're playing, old chap!"

Maxwell smiled as he stepped to the side of the court and served the ball hard with a vicious cut. His opponent, who a few weeks before had won the club championship, failed in the return, went to pieces, and Maxwell won the deciding game hands down, fifteen-four.

Half an hour later he strolled into the reading room and flung himself back in one of the great leather armchairs. Charlie Gardner looked up from the writing desk.

"Anything on for today?" he asked, drawing his words lazily.

"Yes," answered Maxwell simply. "Luncheon."

"Widow's, I suppose," said Charlie, sealing his note with a great blotch of red wax. "Take care of yourself, old boy."

Maxwell smiled again. It delighted him to be patronized by his young coun-

in; no one else had ever attempted it. For the last six months—since he came of age, in fact—Charlie had resented Maxwell's well meant air of guardianship. It certainly was amusing; it gave the elder man a new sensation.

Blair Maxwell, were it not for a habit of reticence, might have been rated a very conceited person. He could have done any number of things successfully—and he acknowledged this to himself with the utmost frankness. He was quite satisfied with the gifts the gods had given him. He was better than well off, but he had too much brains to be exactly happy and too much sense of comfort and respect for his outer physical man to be dissipated. Lacking any governing motive, he might have become a cynic were it not for his sense of humor and a good digestion; so he amused himself and doubted his serious moments. Very often he had remorse for his predominant selfishness—but taking it all in all, however, he possessed for other people the indefinable attraction of individuality.

Charlie Gardner, scratching away on another note, stopped suddenly; he rattled the end of the penholder boyishly against his fine white teeth and gazed vacantly at the inkstand. Maxwell swung round and looked at him.

Charlie was nice to look at. He had pink cheeks; his hair curled over his high white forehead, and he had something of a cherub's expression about his lips. At present he had also rather a tired look, and dark circles were under his prominent blue eyes. "Too many late suppers," thought Maxwell to himself; but he said nothing, and pushing himself out of his chair left the room.

His cousin looked after him furtively and rang the bell for a waiter. Charlie would have scorned the idea that he was in any manner under Maxwell's influence, but unconsciously he was. There were fourteen years' difference in their ages. Maxwell had been his legal guardian, his club sponsor and until of late his confidential adviser in an elder brotherly way; do his best, he could not shake off this feeling of monitorship.

As Charlie, sitting alone in the reading room, slowly sipped his brandy and soda, Blair Maxwell strolled down the Avenue.

A fashionably dressed woman leaned forward in her brougham to bow to him out of the window. Young girls from uptown boarding schools paraded by; some of them stared at him quite frankly. A man leading a fine mastiff out for an airing gave him the groom's semi-military salute; then a milliner's apprentice carrying a bundle looked back over her shoulder. Even the tall policeman on the crossing followed Maxwell's figure with his eyes, much in the same way that Maxwell had looked at the big mastiff.

It was a fine spring morning. There was the sense of salt in the fresh air that New York gets with a strong southeast breeze. The square was alive with nursemaids and children and sparrows. Maxwell crossed by the fountain, and, following a side street, stopped before a little brick house with a paneled door and an ornamental brass knocker.

It was an attractive little house, but it had a squeezed-in appearance; the blank walls of the two adjoining buildings rose high above its roof. Maxwell appeared certain of admittance; he paused to take off his gloves on the doorstep. A maid opened the door in response to the trill of the electric bell.

"Yes, sir, Mrs. Whitford is in, sir," she said, almost before he had entered the hallway.

With the air of one thoroughly at home, Maxwell walked to the little room at the end of the staircase. Feeling in a large silver box on the mantel, he took out a cigarette, lit it, and picking

up a cushion made himself comfortable on the divan.

Maxwell's glance at the round mirror opposite would have betrayed him to an onlooker. He would not have been caught looking at his reflection in a show window the way some men do brazenly on the street, but he liked himself in a glass and knew the blessings of a well fitting coat.

The pink and white window curtains that had fluttered as the visitor rang the bell were part of the interior decorations of a pink and white room, very dainty, with a few mezzotints, many photographs and much silver.

Standing before a little table, all pink ribbons and lace, was a tall woman. Despite the half-shadow, the light was so strong that it was easy to see that she was not very young; the minutest wrinkles were in the corners of her eyelids. The white, beautiful line circling her round throat, it was also clear to see, would soon become too strongly emphasized. Besides, she had just been lying down and sleep creases were across cheek and temple. Leaning forward close to the mirror, she was smoothing the flesh ridges from her face with a soft chamois skin. Alas, it had a strong tinge of the prevailing color!

Just then there was the sound of an intimate knock and a door softly pushed open. The tall woman straightened herself. She did not glance round, but placed her hands on her hips, jutting back her elbows, standing sideways to the mirror, looking over her shoulder.

Of late a horrible thought, a fear, had entered Mrs. Whitford's mind, a fear that Ercilla might be growing handsomer, more beautiful, than herself. She could make the comparison in the glass at this very moment, for a tall young girl was standing in the doorway directly behind her.

"She will never have a figure like mine," thought Mrs. Whitford to herself. "I will grant her eyes, her complexion, but—

"Ercilla," she said querulously, still looking in the glass, "I wish you wouldn't do your hair like that; it makes you look so old."

For a moment there was no reply.

"A plait down my back would be quite attractive," said the girl at last, showing her teeth in a wide amused smile. "And I'd absolutely revel in short skirts, but you know my ankles have gained that grown-up look that makes men stare; it isn't comfortable."

Mrs. Whitford had a quizzical expression on her face just then, and was paying no attention. She was pointing the corners of her eyebrows with a black pencil.

"Can 'Baby' come to luncheon today, mamma?" inquired the girl. The sarcasm was evident.

Her mother turned upon her.

"Why do you talk like that? You know it makes me angry."

Ercilla smiled again.

"What beautiful hair you've got, mamma," she said evenly. "I never saw it look so pretty."

The elder woman jingled the silver things on the toilet table with her jeweled hand. Then she glanced quickly at her reflection. In the strong light one or two white threads showed in the red-brown masses.

"I suppose one must grow old," she sighed.

So straight from the heart came this sigh, and with such a pathos were the words spoken that the girl stepped closer and half extended her arms.

"Mamma! Dear mamma!" she said, her eyes filling in an instant.

"Don't touch me. Don't be foolish, Ercilla," responded Mrs. Whitford, looking coldly away. "Mr. Maxwell is downstairs and the Major is coming. You will come down at luncheon time."

Ercilla had seated herself without speaking. She was twisting her own glorious hair into a single knot at the back of her head. Before, it had topped it like a crown! This very process seemed to make a difference in her age. It was really quite marvelous, the change.

Mrs. Whitford swept out through the door. Ercilla, left alone, fastened her knot of hair at last by a vicious thrust of a single pin, and stepping on tiptoe

across the carpet picked up a photograph.

It was Maxwell. Something had irritated him—he was frowning and looked quite stormy. Ercilla kissed the picture twice, three times, and replaced it softly.

The smoke of the Turkish tobacco filled the sunny room downstairs with filmy strata. Maxwell rose slowly as Mrs. Whitford entered and bowed over her hand.

"You move like a lazy tiger," she said, smiling.

"Is that from a Delsartean prompter?" he inquired amused, for flattery affects men variously.

"No," she laughed; "most men are like some animals."

"I should put that the other way," returned Maxwell. "Some animals are like most men."

They both laughed together now.

"That relieves my remark of its triteness," ended Mrs. Whitford. "Go back to your cushions. But pull down the curtains a little." The room darkened slightly as Maxwell did so. "Now please take the corner; be comfortable. I'll take the big chair where I can watch you."

There was no coquetry in Mrs. Whitford's tone. As they sat there talking in low tones, it was the fencing of two people who understood each other's methods and avoided serious encounters, each constantly on guard.

Mrs. Whitford had often acknowledged to herself that she liked Maxwell better than any man she knew. She might have married him if he had been wealthier—and if he had asked her. But if this should ever happen she feared she would not like him quite so well. Her own marriage had taught her much. The child of expatriated Americans of good family but moderate means, she had lived her young life almost entirely in European capitals, and at the age of eighteen, wise and foolish beyond her years, had married Captain Milton Whitford, an officer in Her Britannic Majesty's service, a brave, handsome scoundrel, with views on life that might cause shuddering.

He had been lost at sea in the wreck of a transport bound for Ceylon, and his death had put an end to scandalous rumors and had averted disclosures and disaster. That was seven years ago. Mrs. Whitford had gone back to England, and thence, after three years' struggling on little money, she had flown quietly into New York. It had been her intention to marry wealth—gold, real estate, bonds, it mattered little. Debts, like lies, she had found, were things that destroy.

Without an effort she had obtained a certain sort of foothold in New York society. But as the criterion of power in metropolitan social latitudes is a capacity for entertaining largely, she had merely fluttered about the edges. In this way she had met Maxwell. They had regarded each other as fair game.

In the dim little room they were still talking when the electric bell sounded again and the Major was announced.

Major Houghton Mills was connected with a regiment that drilled indoors in a handsome stone armory all decorative battlements, glass skylights and loopholes. Though he loved gold lace most ardently, he did not possess the eye of Mars or the tramping step of the grenadier, being a small man who wore eyeglasses and affected an English accent. He was wealthy and a bachelor.

Mrs. Whitford greeted him cordially.

He kissed her hand and nodded to Maxwell, who merely changed his position and relapsed into silence. Few men run conversational opposition to those whom they consider inferior at the game—it is like playing whist with a duffer. So Maxwell let the Major chatter on. The widow drew him out well. The Major, who was really far from dull, appeared to scintillate. Maxwell wondered if Mrs. Whitford adapted herself to his qualifications in the same way. On second thought, he concluded she did not, which was self-flattery, to say the least. In a few minutes the maid announced luncheon.

As they seated themselves at the little table, Ercilla came in softly and took a chair next to Major Mills. Max-

well glanced up at her. It seemed as if his eyes had just opened.

During the year or so he had been coming to the little house he had hardly exchanged two dozen words with her, seeing her only occasionally at table or passing her in the hallway. But it is a mistake to treat very young girls the way some people treat governesses; Maxwell had unconsciously fallen into the error.

Miss Whitford had always behaved like a very young girl; indeed, she spoke so seldom that it was hard to recall the sound of her voice, and she listened with her eyes on her plate, generally betraying little interest in the conversation. So Maxwell, like many others, had passed her over.

The talk at this little lunch party was personal and not worth repeating. The Major did most of it, attempting to shred absent acquaintances in a way he thought quite merciless. Only one thing happened, or at least was said, that relieved the monotony. The military gentleman had spoken of somebody, "smelling of money."

Maxwell put down his wine glass. "Funny thing about that," he remarked—"the money odor, I mean. Few people object to it if it's scenting their own pockets."

As he had addressed the remark to no one in particular, the Major pretended that he did not hear it. Mrs. Whitford also ignored it.

Maxwell glanced across the table. Ercilla was looking straight at him; her eyes were full of laughter. For a second they looked at each other.

"Ye gods! What eyes!" thought Maxwell to himself. He might have added something about being able to laugh with them so delightfully. But as he watched her the girl demurely lowered them.

For the rest of the luncheon Maxwell watched Miss Whitford attentively. Her brow was finer than her mother's, and her chin was stronger; it quite belied the eyes, where tears and laughter were so near the surface.

Mrs. Whitford, glancing down the table, caught Maxwell's intent look; she

closed her fingers in her lap and bit her red lips. No one would have supposed that a sense of fear had welled into her heart. Would she have to retire in favor of her daughter? Would *she* now have to be the lure?

Just as the little party was about to get up from the table Charlie Gardner was announced. He carried his hat and shook hands without taking off his gloves, an English trick he had picked up somehow.

"I've come in to ask you all to come out to Ardleigh," said Charlie blushing. "I'm trying a car I just bought. You can do the running, old man," he half faltered to Maxwell, as if to reassure the others. "I won't risk your necks."

Maxwell laughed, and Mrs. Whitford answered:

"And such a day! We'll go, of course. But come out and smoke; I know you're dying for a cigarette."

Ercilla was standing quite close to the young man as the rest turned to leave. Charlie's face reddened. "Won't you come, too?" he asked beseechingly. "Please—please, come. Plenty of room."

The girl looked at him frankly and shook her head. "No, thanks," she said. "I have something else to do. 'It's very kind, but I can't come.'"

"Will you take a walk with me tomorrow?"

"Yes, if you like—certainly."

"At the same place, then?"

"Yes."

They shook hands. Ercilla ran up the stairs as Charlie joined the party in the little drawing-room.

Maxwell, who had wandered to the window, had picked up a cheap paper-covered book from the sill. It was full of strange cabalistic signs in lead pencil. They were shorthand practice strokes. He placed the book where he had found it and gazed out of the window. He seemed to see Ercilla's laughter-filled eyes; a new thought had taken hold of him.

II

FOUR or five days after the visit to Ardleigh, which was uneventful except

for Charlie's apparent lack of interest in his new six-cylinder car and one or two near-accidents, Maxwell again crossed the square and walked down the side street. As he approached the steps of the little house, the door opened.

It was Ercilla. She was straightening her simple wide-brimmed hat on her head, and smiled a greeting at him before either spoke. Maxwell had not had such a delightful sense of littleness since his college days. Then he remembered how strong, how successful he was, and how funny it all ought to be to him.

"Going out? Don't say that I can't walk a little way with you," he asked, as if he were amused.

"Of course you can," returned the girl. "You can walk as far as the corner. Mother hasn't returned yet—she's lunching somewhere uptown."

When they reached the Avenue, Ercilla turned. "Good-bye," she said. "This is as far as you go, you know. You had better go back and wait."

The blood rushed to Maxwell's forehead. "Well," he said, "it's rather a short dismissal, isn't it?"

The girl laughed over her shoulder and walked away. Maxwell turned also with a smile on his face, and made a saber cut in the air with his stick. He went on past the little house without ascending the steps.

He walked all the way up to Central Park and back to his lodgings, but he could not free his mind of the one idea. "Oh, what nonsense, what nonsense!" he laughed. "Such a child! What right have I to think such things? And I—I—"

On the morning after his failure to keep the half-appointment with Mrs. Whitford, Maxwell heard a tap on his bedroom door. He put down the Indian clubs he had been swinging and threw on a dressing gown.

"Come in," he called.

Charlie Gardner stood there. He was still in his evening clothes, and his face was very pale.

"Come in—come in, Charlie," said Maxwell, as if he had not noticed all this—and a great deal more—at the

first glance. "Been having a great time, I suppose, eh?"

Gardner sank down in the big chair without taking off his coat. He ran his fingers through his curly hair.

"Having a great time?" he repeated. "I am in hell."

"That's pleasant," said Maxwell, seating himself on the edge of the bed. "Where's Pym? He never let me know you were there; sorry if you were kept waiting." He thought it best to let Charlie get out with it in his own way, so he drummed with his fingers on the brass railing and waited. Presently he saw something that touched him. Charlie was weeping. Maxwell got up and bent over him.

"What's the matter, old boy?" he said, putting his arm round his shoulder. Charlie did not move his fingers from his face.

"I am a fool, a worthless idiot," he said. "I am no use. Oh, what a fool I am!"

"What is it?" asked Maxwell, alarmed. "What have you done? See here, Charlie, speak up like a man. You can count on me, you know. Was it last night? Where have you been?"

"Oh, everywhere and anywhere." Charlie dropped his arms and stared at the carpet. "It's not money; I don't care for that. I have gambled and drunk, and I don't care; I don't care," he repeated, "and I can't get over it—I never shall. She won't have me."

"Well?" said Maxwell.

"And I'm going to the devil, I dare say, that's all."

"Very foolish decision," remarked Maxwell, taking his hand from Charlie's shoulder. "Who is she?" It was hypocritical to ask this question; he knew well what the answer would be.

"Ercilla," returned Charlie. "I thought you had seen it. Man, man, I love her so and she will not listen to me; and I can't sleep or rest. What am I to do? I swear to you, Blair, that if she would have me, or even give me hope, I would be a better chap. I'd work; I'd promise anything, but—" He paused.

"But what?" said Maxwell, who was now striding up and down the room.

"But she says that there is no chance. She isn't a child; she's eighteen. She means it."

This time Maxwell laughed, rather a bitter laugh; he stopped and placed both hands on Charlie's shoulders.

"Means it? You little donkey, haven't you found out that a woman never means anything? See here; I will give you a bit, not from my own experience, but from what a woman who knows the world once told me of her own free will. If a man really wants a woman, and he is manly with it and straightforward, not to be discouraged, and is not weak or driveling, the chances are one thousand to one he will get her, give him time, provided—"

"Provided what?" asked Charlie, looking up, a strange nervous smile in the corners of his mouth.

"Provided," returned Maxwell calmly, "a better man than he is not setting him the pace."

"There is no other man," said Charlie. "Do you know of any?"

"No," said Maxwell, "I do not. Stick to it, son; sit tight and take your fences—straight riding wins."

To Charlie the words meant more than mere encouragement. He was quite calm now. He looked his cousin in the eye.

"You know something?" he faltered. "I had half feared that you—that it wasn't the widow—that you must have seen that Ercilla's worth ten of her—that—"

Maxwell interposed, seeing the drift of Charlie's reasoning. "All rot," he said; "disabuse your mind of that at once." But as he said this he stopped and walked to the window. Charlie approached him.

"I am a fool," he said. "Give me a lift, old man. Tell me what to do."

Maxwell returned the handgrasp. "Go in and win," he heartened with an affectation of jollity. "I see no cause for desperation. There are all things in your favor."

Pym the valet came in just then, interrupting further talk, and Charlie, promising to go to bed and rest, stole out as if years had been lifted from his shoulders.

"I don't know," remarked Maxwell a few minutes later to his lather-covered visage in the shaving glass, "but what I'm the fool. It is a fine thing never to doubt your own intentions. Charlie knows what he wants. I've burned my bridges." Then he hurried into his clothes, and went down to the club for breakfast.

There was a note awaiting him. It was from Mrs. Whitford requesting him to drop in that morning if he could.

After a glance at the papers he hastened down the Avenue, and at every step toward the little house his heart sank lower and lower. Strange to say, he only smiled at this, as if it amused him greatly.

He was about to ring the bell when the maid opened the door, letting out a tradesman-looking person who glanced at him sharply. Maxwell, without a word to the maid, who was evidently disconcerted, announced himself and walked down the hall. He thought he heard hurried footsteps as if someone had just hastened up the stairs. There was a little room at the right, with a portière of jingling beads and strings of thin bamboo. He had to pass it on the way to the drawing-room.

A smothered sobbing sound attracted his attention; he stopped for a minute and looked in. There a figure was stretched full length on the divan. It only needed one glance to show him that it was Ercilla. The convulsive movement of the shoulders told him she was weeping.

As he was about to hasten on his elbow touched the portière; it clicked and tinkled. The girl raised her head, and seeing who it was, stood up.

Maxwell spoke at once. "Pardon me," he said. "I would not have intruded; I—"

"There is no intrusion," the girl broke in. "I should like to speak to you. It's come at last—we're in great trouble. I thought she'd send for you."

She remained standing very straight, her handkerchief, rolled into a little ball, clasped in her left hand, her fingers working nervously. Maxwell, pushing

through the portière, came nearer to her.

"Ercilla," he said, for some reason speaking her name as if he had always done so, "I see something's gone wrong. Can't I help you?" He took one of her hands in his.

She raised her eyes to his without a word. An instant only did Maxwell return this look. The figure of her mother came up before him, and then his interview with Charlie. What right had he to look at her like this, he, of all people?

"Come, come; you can tell me. I'm your friend."

She stepped backward from him and half leaned against the wall. She spoke quickly.

"I will tell you then—since you are my friend, and you may help me if you can or care to. Your cousin wishes me to be his wife; my mother wishes me to be his wife. Do you wish me to be his wife?" She paused. "Tell me the truth."

Maxwell spoke and his voice was a whisper. "Do you love him?"

"No," the girl answered, "I do not—but there is more to tell—more that has to be told. We have reached the end; we haven't any money—not a penny. There was a cheque returned from the bank this morning." Her voice went to a whisper. "Oh, tell me—has my mother borrowed anything from you?"

Maxwell shook his head.

"On your word of honor?" She laid her fingers on his arm.

Maxwell spoke this time. "On my word of honor."

Tears gathered thickly in her eyes. "Oh, I'm so ashamed to talk to you like this," she said, "but I must—I must! She's borrowed money from others, but I had hoped—oh, I had hoped—" She stopped.

It was all he could do to prevent himself from putting his arms round her. He had to keep himself well in hand. A voice within him kept saying: "Speak! Speak! Why don't you speak?" And yet in that instant he appeared to see Charlie Gardner's sorrowful face and reddened, sleepless eyes, and the doubt

of his own intentions, the realization of his own position, swept over him. He kept silent.

"You'll have to do something for me," she said. "Find me some work—anything, anything, so I can support myself. I've been studying to do so for a year or more. I can't stand it any longer. I cannot live this life. I must get away from it. She'll have to sell her jewels now. She's kept them to the last, but it's the one way out for her. As for me—I'm going; I *must* go. Find me something to do."

"The thing for you to do"—it was with an effort that he kept his voice from shaking—"the thing for you to do is to marry Charlie. You can make a man of him. He needs you—he needs a woman like yourself—he isn't spoiled entirely yet—he's young. I don't know what will happen to him if you don't. I've just grown to know you. Why won't you?"

Ercilla was bending forward, her face in her hands. Suddenly she dropped them and raised her eyes. "Is that your last word?" she said. "Mother's coming down; I hear her. Don't tell her what I've told you; but I had to—I had to." She hurried past him and descended the stairs to the basement.

"Oh, here you are!" Mrs. Whitford's voice sounded with a forced note of careless gaiety. "Here's where you're hiding!"

She pushed aside the dangling portière.

"Yes," Maxwell answered, "but not hiding exactly. Just talking with Ercilla."

Maxwell had caught the frightened glance as if she expected to find her daughter present. Her relief at seeing he was alone was evident. She came so close to him that he could feel her breath; it was almost as if she had leaned against him.

"Urge her to have some sense," she said. "Speak a good word for Charlie; he wishes to marry her. Did she say anything about it to you? Did she say anything else?"

Maxwell found it hard to reply.

"What can I say?" he murmured.

"Charlie is a fine boy, and I think he would make a good married man. From what I know of him, I am sure he loves your daughter earnestly. I've told her that—he told me, of course." Despite all his efforts to appear natural and at ease, the words came from him with a metallic sound, hard and forced.

Mrs. Whitford put her white hand on Maxwell's sleeve. "Ercilla is not sentimental," she went on quickly; "she's intensely practical. She really cares for him, I am sure she does—but she's such a non-committal person you can't find out her real sentiments in anything. The idea of her thinking of refusing such an offer! You'd have no objection, surely? She'll bring him no money, but—"

"It would be the best thing for him in the world." Maxwell spoke the words with the same metallic emphasis.

They had been standing all this time, but now she motioned him to be seated, and together they sat on a divan. The light coming in from the hall fell on Mrs. Whitford's face. She placed her fingers to her lips to hide their trembling. It was with a feeling of pity he noticed her puffed, reddened eyes and how she had aged since he had last seen her, but her jewels still shone on her slender fingers. Well he knew how they would be the last to go—the evidence of prosperity—the evidence that is so needful to maintain position! It would be like wringing blood drops from her heart to part with them. They are the *open sesame* to the concourse of careless lives. With rubies and diamonds on her fingers, she could talk gaily of her debts, her extravagances, even of her poverty. With their loss, or even with the substitution of false gems, the end was nearing or had come.

"Do you know I was nearly frightened to death," she faltered, speaking almost gaspingly. "She's been studying shorthand—Ercilla. Think of it! And last week she advertised for a position! I had to beg her almost upon my knees to put it off. She's possessed of the idea of earning a living, and that sort of non-sense," she concluded.

It was strange that these people who

had known one another so long, so well, could not speak out honestly! They still fenced as they always had. To Maxwell the game had grown worse than tiresome, but he still could control his forces.

"Oh, well," he said, "things may work out all right. I'm going to change the subject for a minute."

He met the look of fright in Mrs. Whitford's eyes with a forced show of diverted interest.

"Do you remember," he asked almost carelessly, "about a month ago when you asked me about stocks, and I made my prophetic utterance about Steel Common?"

She did not pick up the cue very quickly, so he went on.

"Of course you must. Well, it all came out just as I had predicted. I took the liberty of putting you in the little pool—it wasn't much; the margin was very small. I believe there is something like three thousand to your credit now at my broker's. You're not angry, are you?" He allowed himself the liberty of tapping her playfully on the hand.

"Angry? Why, no; but I really shouldn't take it, should I? You might have told me before. Supposing—"

"Nonsense!" He rose. "If you'll come into the drawing-room, I'll write you a cheque. You might as well have it now."

The portières jangled icily as he held them apart for her and followed her down the hall.

When he handed her the slip of paper she spoke the first truth telling words, though she still parried warily.

"I don't know how I could have paid you back if you had lost," she answered. "I've been awfully hard up lately."

He forestalled any further explanations.

"There wasn't much chance of my losing; I had gilt-edged information. Winners, eh—both of us!"

Each knowing that the other perfectly understood the situation and was aware of every condition, they stood there for a moment in silence. But to the woman the tension of their first meeting was past. She gazed at him

warmly, admiration in her eyes. He accepted that open homage. Secretly he thought he had done it rather well, but he was anxious to be off.

"I've an important meeting at twelve," he said, "so I must be going."

"Shall you be at the Armsteads' this afternoon? They're going to have very good music, I believe," she ventured.

The situation was growing into farce comedy.

"No," he said, "I'm afraid I can't. Let me hear from you tomorrow—if there's anything I can do for you."

"*Au revoir*, then."

"*Au revoir*."

The door closed after him. He smiled as he walked away. He had won the game, in a sense; she had dropped the foil! But what was to be the end of it? "Here's a pretty mix-up," said Maxwell to himself. "I wonder if I've made a mess of things?"

He thought of Ercilla. What a brave little woman she was! How could a mother and daughter be so different, living together yet having standpoints so opposite? If he had only led a different life and were younger! Oh, if he thought it possible that she could ever have cared for him—but no, how could she? He had engaged in a flirtation with her mother that had called for attention, even remark; he knew that well. There was only one way out of it—Ercilla must marry Charlie. Youth called to youth; she'd grow to care for him. But then—Suddenly he stopped and switched at the air with his stick. Mrs. Whitford had come out in her real colors! Would it be right to saddle the boy with such an incubus from the start without letting him know? Yes, it was a pretty mix-up all round—a fine tangle he had gotten himself into. How it was to be unraveled he could not see. He began to be terribly bored with his thoughts and surroundings. So he went to the station and took a train for the country club.

III

WHEN Maxwell returned after a three days' sojourn, during which he had refused to be companionable and had

played lonesomely over the links, alleging need of practice, he found three notes at his apartment. Odd to relate, they were all of the same tenor. They asked for personal and immediate interviews. One was from Charlie crying to know where he was and begging him to meet him at once. The second was from Mrs. Whitford, requesting him to call, as she must see him—the “must” heavily underscored. The third was from Major Houghton Mills—he would “like to get hold of” him. Pym the valet, to whom Maxwell had not confided his hiding place, told him that the telephone had been ringing constantly.

He had hardly finished reading the three important epistles when the little bell jingled. It was Charlie on the wire calling from the club.

“I’ve just come back,” said Maxwell in response to a question. . . . “Yes, yes, come up; I’ll wait for you here.” He hung up the receiver and sat down in the chair by the desk. “Now for it,” he said, dipping his pen in the ink and beginning a line to the Major asking him to dine that night; then he wrote a note to the widow which incidentally begged a little time, as it stated he would call on the morrow. He had half expected a word from Ercilla—why, he did not know. He was glad she had not written him.

Hardly had he despatched the notes by Pym when Charlie Gardner arrived. The boy’s appearance had much improved since their last interview. His eye was clear, and his manner had a decision that was new to him. Maxwell rather cynically put him to a little test as soon as they had greeted each other. He waved toward the sideboard. “Will you have a drink, Charlie?” he asked casually.

“No, thanks; I’m not thirsty.” Then, with a blush: “I’m going to cut that all out, Blair; there’s nothing in it.”

“Good,” said Maxwell. His eyes sparkled.

“Blair,” Charlie blurted out, “I’m going to ask you a question as a man of the world.”

The corners of Maxwell’s mouth quivered in a slight smile. “I’m begin-

ning to doubt my knowledge under that head,” he replied, “but sit down and go on.”

“Would you,” asked Charlie, leaning forward with his arm on the desk, “marry a woman whom you loved—loved to distraction”—the boy’s eyes filled in his earnestness—“but who confessed that she did not love you, only ‘liked’ you and would try to make you a good wife?”

“Well, that depends,” replied his cousin. “If it was Ercilla Whitford, I think I would.”

Charlie extended his hand and grasped Maxwell’s for a moment.

“There are conditions,” he said; “there’s a lot of explaining to come. It seems you’re the one to do it.”

“I don’t think I’m very good at that.” Maxwell withdrew his hand from Charlie’s and waved it with an attempt at lightness. “But still—go on.” He smiled as Charlie continued seriously:

“Ercilla has parted from her mother. There must have been no end of a row, I take it, but she didn’t go into details—only she won’t accept another penny from her—won’t live with her.”

“Where is she?” asked Maxwell suddenly.

Charlie flushed. “She’s at the Girl’s Friendly—it’s a kind of a ‘home.’ She’s got a job in a publishing house. Oh, Blair, we can’t let that sort of thing go on.”

“No,” replied Maxwell, “it shouldn’t go on very long. But it’s the best thing just now.” Then he added under his breath: “Brave little woman!”

Charlie caught the remark and rose suddenly. “Isn’t she,” he cried, “the finest in the world? But now look here; she wrote this note for you.”

Maxwell took the folded sheet. It contained only a few words:

DEAR MR. MAXWELL:

Please tell Mr. Gardner everything—all you know. I’ve left Number Forty and am not going back.

E. W.

“She might have called me ‘Charlie,’” said the boy as Maxwell put the note on the table; “she often does when we talk together.”

“Well,” said Maxwell, repressing a

smile this time, "they can't get on together, that's evident. It seems to be final. There are two kinds of women, my dear boy, who can never preserve close relationships for any length of time—the woman who plays straight and the woman who doesn't. Even if they are mother and daughter it makes no difference; they are bound to go their separate ways."

Maxwell paused; he was verging close to infringement of the unwritten rules that exist between men who know them where a woman is concerned. But veiled allusions would not do. He had to come out with it.

"Mrs. Whitford, my dear boy, is as near social and financial shipwreck as she can be, that's about the fact of it—only her cleverness has kept her inside the margin; it's pitiful, pitiful! But it's been harder on the girl than on herself—I mean harder ever since she discovered it. I suppose," he added thoughtfully, "she hoped her mother would marry, but"—he shrugged his shoulders—"perhaps she couldn't bring the right one to book. Then came debts, duns, disaster."

"Hasn't she anything at all?" Charlie asked.

"She's been sailing pretty close to the wind for the last four years, I take it; and now"—Maxwell paused again—"she's at the end of the rope. Pretty tragic, eh, when a woman who feels that her charms are waning faces the abyss. It makes it pretty hard for you, too, Charlie—I'm talking pretty straight."

Gardner thought a minute. "Couldn't I give her an allowance? Wouldn't she keep away," he asked—"live somewhere else?"

"Well, that's one way out of it, if—"

"Oh, but I intend to marry Ercilla," said Charlie. "I'll win her—I know I can—I feel sure I can."

"Good," cheered Maxwell, rising and slapping him on the shoulder. "That's the proper spirit."

"Blair, I'm going to ask you a question."

"I forestall it," said Maxwell. "If you mean to ask whether there has ever been anything between Mrs. Whitford

and myself—that is, anything more than a desperate flirtation—I'll answer you, on my honor, no. My intentions are seldom serious."

"Does she owe you any money?"

"Not a penny—that on my honor also."

Gardner appeared relieved. "I'm going to ask a great favor of you, Blair," he said. "For certain reasons I couldn't go into the negotiations that may be necessary. Couldn't you act as my—"

"Go-between?" suggested Maxwell.

"Yes, 'go-between' with Mrs. Whitford. It's a delicate position, I know, but I'll give her five thousand dollars a year to live abroad."

Maxwell smiled. "Can you afford that?" he asked. "She might take less."

"I'll give her that," said Charlie decidedly. "It makes quite a hole, but we would have enough to live on. And now another favor—one much easier. Will you be my best man if—"

"Certainly." How could he refuse?

Charlie pushed himself to his feet.

"I'm going to call on Ercilla this evening. You'll have to come some time with me. You have to sit in a little stuffy parlor with religious pictures—they have rules like a boarding school. You know she won't go out in my car or come to luncheon or dinner—" He paused. "Probably she will some day, old man, if you come along," he added; "you're so much older."

"Count on me," said Maxwell. "But I think she's right."

Then they rose and shook hands.

The warm clasp the boy had given him remained on Maxwell's fingers after the door had closed. He sat there in the big chair thinking. Then he rose and went to the window. "It'll work out," he said to himself, drawing a long breath. "I wonder what in the deuce Mills wants with me?"

Maxwell and the Major dined at the club, and as the former had appointed a very early hour they had the dining room all to themselves. The military gentleman was a trifle ill at ease, a fact that disclosed itself by his volubility upon trivial subjects. His host helped

him come to the crux of the situation with the salad and the Major accepted the lead.

"Did you go to the Armsteads' musical shindy?" Maxwell asked. "Mrs. Whitford told me she was going, but I hate music in the afternoon—it's like taking coffee before dinner."

"Yes," said the Major, "I was there; she dined with me that night and I—er—lunched with her day before yesterday."

"Ercilla there?" asked Maxwell. "Oh, I forgot—she's off on a visit somewhere."

"Yes; so her mother told me. Do you know where she's gone?"

"No," returned Maxwell casually; "stopping with some friends, I believe."

"Glad to hear that," said the Major, relief showing in his tone. "You know I feared there had been a falling out of some kind. I suppose Mrs. Whitford has told you the news."

"No." Maxwell put down his wine glass. "What is it?"

"Why, she's given up the little house—talks of going back to England."

"Really! It must be a very sudden decision—she had said nothing to me."

"That's odd," replied the Major, his little eyes roving nervously over the tablecloth. "I thought you were pretty much in her confidence."

"I? Lord, no!"

"I'd thought," Major Mills continued, "that you and she—that you were seriously—" He broke off confused.

"My dear chap," said Maxwell, succeeding in catching the Major's eye and then letting his own glance fall to his plate, "you don't wish to embarrass me, do you? If I had any hope in that quarter, it's all over now."

"Do you mean to say she refused you?" Major Mills stopped struggling with a large leaf of lettuce and dropped his knife and fork.

"I don't think I had any chance from the first, though I was once conceited enough to think so. But why hammer away at it? Let up a bit on me, won't you, can't you?"

The Major stowed the pendant leaf away with his fingers.

"You knew Mrs. Whitford before I did," he said a little thickly. "I'm going to ask you a very pertinent, almost an impertinent question. Do you know anything about her resources? I know her family had very little money and her husband was a notorious waster. Sometimes I've—er—feared—"

"Well, I can answer that," replied Maxwell, "because I do happen to know. I think she should have about five thousand dollars a year—maybe more, maybe less. What it's invested in I couldn't say. I have an idea a trust of some kind."

"Then she never sought your advice in any financial matters or quandaries?"

"I believe I once mentioned something about Steel Common to her."

The Major took the bull by the horns. "Well, lately I'd heard stories," he said, "and I—"

"Tea table talk," interrupted Maxwell. "A woman as beautiful and as clever as Mrs. Whitford is bound to have jealous friends."

"That's so," returned the Major, and then he went on, blurting out the words as if he wanted to get through with them. "She's been rather hard up lately—she told me so; in fact, I—er—lent her some money—oh, I insisted on it. She didn't wish to take it at first."

"Great Scott!" said Maxwell. "Was it much?"

"Two thousand dollars. She paid it back to me two days ago."

The look of assumed astonishment on Maxwell's face at the Major's first declaration changed to one of genuine surprise. "Well, why shouldn't she?" he said.

Major Mills drew his napkin over his fat knees; the wrinkles ran all the way up on his forehead. "I am going to ask you a point blank question, Maxwell, which you needn't answer unless you want to. Has she ever come to you? I ask just as man to man, friend to friend."

"No," replied Maxwell simply, "never. I suppose she felt she didn't know me well enough, or didn't wish to place herself in my debt in any way. But, by gad, if she paid you the com-

pliment, I wouldn't go round bragging about it."

"Oh, I don't, I don't," interposed the Major. "For heaven's sake, this is in strictest confidence; and I insisted, I told you."

"Well," went on Maxwell seriously, "I think the very last thing she would want you to do was to tell it to me, for instance—especially after what has happened. I'm not a poor man, and I would have— When did she say she was going to sail? I shall be in England next month. Any chance of your coming over?"

"No," replied the Major, "I hadn't thought of it exactly." His little eyes had a far-away expression. He drew a long breath of relief, and now Maxwell played his trump card.

"You've been rather confidential with me, Mills," he said, "and I am going to reciprocate—only you mustn't tell anyone, not even talk it over with Mrs. Whitford for a day or so. For certain reasons she would like to keep it quiet also."

The wrinkles again chased themselves up the Major's brow.

"You know that young cousin of mine, Charlie, may marry Ercilla Whitford. He's head over heels in love with her; in fact, I am quite sure that's just what's going to happen. I've done all I can to encourage it. I believe in early marriages. We old duffers have put it off too long, haven't we? Though perhaps it's not for lack of trying," he added.

"They'll have to wait some time, won't they," asked the Major, "Charlie and Ercilla?"

"Why? She's eighteen."

"Eighteen!" exclaimed Major Houghton Mills. "No! I thought she was only a very well developed child of fifteen at the utmost."

"That's because your attention was elsewhere. I suffered from the same complaint. But she's a fine girl. Poor Mrs. Whitford! I feel sorry for her. Gad, Mills, it's hard for a woman to be left alone, especially when she's beautiful and attractive and companionable—but that seems to be her choice."

"Eighteen!" Major Mills was mur-

muring to himself, pulling at his stubby mustache. "Why—er— I thought—"

"Oh, her mother married very young—sixteen I think it was."

"It's most astonishing," returned the Major.

"Yes, isn't it?" assented Maxwell, looking up. "Kind of bowled me over, too. Hello! Here are Phillips and Carter!" He glanced at the door. "And there's Tommy Gilman just coming in. We can have a hand at bridge after they finish eating. What do you say?"

"No," the Major returned slowly. "Sorry—can't; I've got some letters to write. I must be off presently."

A few minutes later Maxwell followed him to the head of the stairs. He stood there until he heard the Major order a taxicab from the doorman.

"Bless you, my children!" he said to himself. "It seems I missed my vocation. I'm a natural born matchmaker." He turned on his heel, entered the library, took down a book and endeavored to read.

There he was found by Charlie Gardner aimlessly turning over the pages. The boy's face was flushed and elated. "Blair," he cried, leaning over the back of the easy chair, "she's accepted me, finally. You know I really think you did it, old man. I'll never be able to repay you."

"Don't try to," responded Maxwell. "The sight of your shining face is joy enough."

Even as he spoke these words there came into his own heart a bitter, gnawing envy. Unconsciously he tried to shut off the boy's effluvia of enthusiasm.

"By the way, Charlie," he said, "I think your future mother-in-law would take less than you suppose, much less. Perhaps you'll get out of it for nothing."

"What do you mean?" said Charlie.

"Well," returned Maxwell, "there are things portending."

III

HAVING written Mrs. Whitford that he would call on the following afternoon, Maxwell felt it incumbent upon himself

to make good his promise. He was tempted to put it off on the plea of important business, for it certainly might be well to give the Major another day's start. He had not fully made up his mind when he arrived at the club for luncheon; but he'd hardly left his hat and stick when one of the servants told him he was wanted at the telephone. No sooner had he picked up the receiver in the stuffy little booth when he recognized Mrs. Whitford's voice.

Why it is that a man who generally can control his powers of dissimulation, even when taken unawares and face to face, has all such faculties scattered to the winds when conversation must be carried on at a distance through the medium of a wire, it might be hard to state. But such indeed is the fact. That the widow was very desirous of seeing him at once was shown by the simple directness and almost authority of her summons. And that his capacity for evasion was stultified was proved by the fact that he said he would order a cab and put in an immediate appearance. In less than ten minutes he ran up the steps of the little house. Mrs. Whitford was waiting for him. As soon as she was sure that the maid had retired beyond hearing, she turned from her listening position at the door and came close to him.

"Where is Ercilla?" she asked.

"Why, don't you know?" he responded.

"No, I do not," said Mrs. Whitford. "I only know that she left here, taking some of her belongings while I was away, and that she wrote me she was in the hands of friends and had secured work. A nice way for a girl to treat her mother, when I've done so much for her—given up so much—sacrificed everything!"

Maxwell had never seen much evidence of this, so he could not be expected to show great sympathy; he remained silent.

"She's got to return," went on Mrs. Whitford, in a tone of ultimate decision. "Do you know where she is, or how I can get at her?"

"No," answered Maxwell, "I don't know where she is, but I know that what

she has written you is true. She's perfectly safe, and I believe she has a position; but what she's doing I haven't the least idea."

"I'm going to be married," said Mrs. Whitford, bringing out the words as if making the statement that she was going to the dentist. "Major Mills asked me to marry him, and I have accepted him."

"Felicitations!" said Maxwell.

"Thanks," replied the widow. "You're the kind of man a woman knows she can count upon for *that* at least, but I suspected you'd be rather surprised."

"Not in the least," Maxwell responded. "I've wondered why it had not happened before. May I ask when the happy event will take place?"

"Major Mills wishes it to be as soon as possible," responded the widow; "but of course Ercilla must return. You've got to see that she comes back to me."

"I haven't the least authority over her, my dear Mildred; but I might as well tell you that Ercilla is going to be married very shortly herself."

"Indeed!" Mrs. Whitford grasped his arm. "You don't mean to say that—" She paused, her eyes searching his face.

"To Charlie," Maxwell replied.

It was Mrs. Whitford's turn to be silent. "Don't you think it would be very much better for her to be married from her mother's house?" she asked at last.

"Yes," replied Maxwell; "there I agree with you entirely."

"I should think she would see that for herself."

"I should hope so; but Ercilla seems to be a young woman of decided character. Yet, under the circumstances, I shall do everything I can to persuade her."

"Do Charlie's relatives know that he is thinking of marrying?"

"We haven't any relatives," Maxwell responded. "He and I were only sons. We have but a maiden aunt, up in Dedham. I believe we're expected to cut her up between us," he added; "if she doesn't live to be a hundred."

Mrs. Whitford smiled; the smile seemed to relieve the tension a bit.

"Blair," she said impulsively, "will you lend me five thousand dollars? I know how generous you've been—"

"No," said Maxwell slowly, "but," he added before he could see the effect of his words, "I'll *give* you that as a wedding present, and in advance, too, if it will help you any."

"Oh, it's dreadful, dreadful," replied Mrs. Whitford, breaking down and sinking into the big chair. "What must you think of me?"

"It isn't dreadful at all," replied Maxwell, "and I'll tell you this much further: the day that"—he paused—"you marry the Major, I can promise you that you will begin to be in receipt of"—he smiled to himself as he thought of Charlie's offer and his being deputized as a "go-between"—"of twenty-five hundred dollars a year. That will give you pin money."

"What do you mean? What are you talking about?" interposed Mrs. Whitford, looking up.

"I mean exactly what I say," replied Maxwell; "but there is a proviso, and that is that Ercilla's marriage takes place before yours. I'm sure that Charlie would be glad to give you that as an allowance if you'll accept it. Now," he added concludingly, "doesn't that make things very much easier?"

"I don't know," replied Mrs. Whitford in a low voice, "whether to hate you or admire you."

Maxwell let that pass without comment.

"Well, then," said he, "we'll consider it all settled. I will take care of the details, and you may rest assured that no one will know anything about it. Don't ever speak of it to Charlie."

"Thank you," said Mrs. Whitford simply. "I don't know what else I can say. I can't try to explain myself."

"Let everything go unexplained," replied Maxwell; "that's the best way out of it."

"Perhaps it is," acquiesced the widow.

A few minutes after his departure Mrs. Whitford, up in a little pink and

white room, took a photograph out of a silver frame and tore it into very small pieces.

If there was one thing that the prime mover in all these doings prided himself on, it was his knowledge of the world. Mrs. Whitford would make the Major a very good wife. He was the kind of man who would number such a helpmeet among his prideful possessions; and the lady, having everything she wanted, would never give him a moment's anxiety. She would spend his money in just the way he would like her to, and Maxwell knew she would have tact enough never to show that she was grateful. By accepting things as a matter of course she would add to her value and treble the Major's happiness.

Of course the very first thing Maxwell did was to search for Charlie. He found him at last at the riding club, where he had just returned from a gallop in the Park. Once more he noticed the change in the boy's appearance. Despite his healthful exuberance, he appeared to have grown half a dozen years older. After he had changed his riding things they had a cup of tea together in the club smoking room, and there Maxwell told of all his plans and arrangements. It was agreed that they would call on Ercilla together this evening. But this was amended by Charlie's suggestion that Maxwell write a note asking her to dine with both of them in some quiet little place. "It'll be a family party," he said. "But supposing she won't return to her mother's? What then?"

"Oh, but she will," Maxwell replied. "She'll see things in the right light."

Charlie jingled his spoon round the edge of his saucer. "I say," he said at last, "don't you think we're playing it a bit low down on the Major?"

"No," was his cousin's reply, "I don't. My conscience is perfectly clear. I'm firmly convinced that I'm doing my best to—er"—he paused—"to make everybody happy. What's the use of explaining?"

"Well," replied Charlie, "perhaps you're right."

That night after Maxwell had re-

turned from the little dinner of three—for Ercilla had accepted and they had dined at a little place where the food was excellent and fine dresses were at a discount—Maxwell sat in his study and endeavored to persuade himself into an attitude of self-congratulation. Ercilla had consented to return to her mother; she had required no urging.

It had been a strange little meeting; as Maxwell went over it in his mind it seemed stranger still. Charlie had been rather silent, his eyes constantly on Ercilla's face; Maxwell had done most of the talking. He had begun with a gaiety that, although forced, seemed natural enough. Charlie had laughed at his sallies, occasionally seeking to catch a responsive glance from the girl, as if he wondered whether she appreciated what a marvelous cousin he had. Miss Whitford had smiled a strange inscrutable smile at times. She was perfectly at her ease; in fact, of the three she behaved in the most natural manner. Again, Maxwell had been struck by her beauty and the character that shone in her face. He could scarcely persuade himself that she was only eighteen; perhaps it was the way she had managed her hair. He had never noticed what a lot of it there was before, nor that there were reddish gold glints in the dark masses. Her bearing toward Charlie was so matter of fact that it was almost sisterly. Once, when he had laid his hand on hers, she had turned and smiled at him. If she had returned the pressure it was hardly evident, although she had not avoided his fingers in the least. Their attitude had nothing of the mutual shyness of lovers. Maxwell felt that this had made the situation all the easier for him, especially when he dropped persiflage and came down to concrete facts. When he told of the Major's and her mother's approaching marriage, Ercilla had raised her eyebrows. It was as much as if she had said, "Score one for mamma," but instead she only remarked: "Well, well; I don't know whether to be surprised or not!" Which was non-committal.

It was after this that she had decided that she would go back to the little

house on the morrow. It was further agreed that the wedding should take place on the following Monday; only a few friends would be invited. Charlie and Ercilla were to get the license and Maxwell would look after everything else.

Once more back in his rooms, Maxwell sat down and began to think matters over. He rehearsed every day for the past week, and he found that everything centered about Ercilla. She was the pivot about which all the events, so far as he was concerned, had turned. He had done his best to favor Charlie's suit, not so much on his cousin's account as because it was the best way out for her. He had helped her mother and involved himself in a mesh of prevarication for the very same reason. So far as Major Mills was concerned, he had quite ruthlessly made a cat's paw of him because he seemed to help smooth matters generally. But where did *he* come in in all this? He had always acknowledged that he was selfish, and that his own comfort and pleasure were the motives of most of his actions. And yet in this case he seemed to have lost sight of himself entirely. There must be a reason for that, and the reason was his first conclusion, Ercilla. There was no dodging the issue, and suddenly he faced it with a start—he was in love with her—deeply, surely attracted, as he had been by no other woman in all his life. But what could he do? Nothing, absolutely nothing. Thank heaven, she had only shown that she wanted him for a friend; she had accepted his counsel and deferred to his advice. During the dinner at the little restaurant, while talking with Charlie, he had felt that the girl's eyes were on him, that she was watching him closely; and he had purposely refrained from turning at the moment, fearful of surprising her look and doubting his capability for controlling his own expression. The matter-of-fact way that the meeting had concluded lent a sense of oddness and unreality to it all. He began carefully to dissect the situation. Really, it was this: Charlie was going to marry a woman, infinitely his superior, who did

not love him; and not only this, but he, Maxwell, was urging a girl whom he now acknowledged he loved—but who was far removed from him—to tie herself up for life perhaps with a weak and rather flighty young man, whose capacities were entirely untried and doubtful. He had also practically arranged an alliance between a woman whose motives were mercenary and a man against whom he should have cherished nothing but kindly feelings. If mutual unhappiness and trouble followed he would be the one to blame. He had made a sad mess of it all round, but he could not back out. He was pledged to see it through. Even if he thought that Ercilla might care for him—an idea he put from him with all the force of his will—it would not alter matters. It could not be; it was not to be thought of. The chance of speaking for himself had never existed. But why had the girl spoken to him so frankly about her mother's and her own relations to the world at large?

He had thought so long and smoked so many cigars that, although it was nearly midnight, all desire for sleep had left him. Rather aimlessly he rose and walked to the bookcase and searched the titles of the beautifully bound volumes for something that might give a different trend to his mind. His fingers stopped at Marcus Aurelius, but he did not take the volume from the shelf. The door-bell rang sharply and a knock followed. He opened the door and stepped back in astonishment. It was Mrs. Whitford.

"Good heavens!" he exclaimed. "What are you doing here?"

"I had to come," she answered, "because I should have gone crazy if I hadn't seen you. I had just come in from the Opera. My telephone was out of order. I ordered a taxicab and drove up here. I stopped at your club, too, on the way. Oh, it was a dreadful thing to do! I sent in word first—but you weren't there—and then I came here. There was a light in your window. I gave no name to the elevator man—he took me up without comment."

"Well, what is it?" said Maxwell.

"What's happened? Please sit down." All sorts of ideas were fitting through his mind. Mrs. Whitford's face had terror in it; she glanced back toward the door as if she were pursued.

"Blair," she said, "I never spoke to you much about my husband, did I? I didn't want to. But you know after he left Bombay on the *Ariadne*, the steamer that was lost, things came out. He was short in his company's funds—he had forged. An order for his arrest had been cabled to Colombo, but of course he never arrived there. Ercilla knows nothing of her father's past."

"Well?" Maxwell was still at a loss to gather what all this might prelude. "How does this affect you now? And why should anything be so urgent as to—"

"Bring me here at this hour of night?" asked Mrs. Whitford. "I tell you, I should have gone crazy if I hadn't someone to talk with—to ask what to do. Read that."

She took a single sheet of paper from a crumpled, cheap envelope. Maxwell held it under the reading lamp. From it also fell a clipping from an evening paper. He had seen it before. It was an announcement of the engagement of Major Houghton Mills to the beautiful Mrs. Milton Whitford, with the usual social reporter's balderdash. The note, scrawled in a rather shaky handwriting that had traces of past firmness, read as follows:

Better not do anything rash. This is the advice of a voice from the past. You had better appoint some place to meet me, or send your lawyer or someone to represent you. I am willing to accept any overtures.

It was signed "R. Milton," and dated from a Pearl Street lodging house.

"Blackmail!" said Maxwell, throwing down the note. "Have you any reason to fear this person?"

"Fear him!" Mrs. Whitford's voice was harsh with fright. "It is my husband—that is his handwriting!"

It was a good proof of the condition of Maxwell's nerves that he made no exclamation. His brows knitted a little closer and his lips tightened. He gazed into Mrs. Whitford's staring eyes.

"And have you known that your husband was alive?" he asked.

"No, Blair—on my honor, no. I had no idea of it. I had often dreamed it, feared it; but I knew nothing, *nothing!* There were only three known survivors from the *Ariadne*, one sailor and two enlisted men, picked up by native boats. Oh, my God! My God! What am I to do?"

"You had better," suggested Maxwell, "go home and go to bed. I'll call a cab for you."

"My own is waiting," Mrs. Whitford replied. "But isn't it dreadful, dreadful! Too awful to be true!"

She struck her forehead with the back of her hand. "Just when the light was dawning," she went on, "just as things began to clear for us. I have half a mind to kill myself!" Then she dropped both hands on the table, her fingers spread out stiffly. "Oh, Blair, Blair, take care of Ercilla. Charlie's not the one for her. She's only marrying him because you want her to. She loves you—you. Think of me telling you this—*me!*"

Maxwell started now. "Please control yourself—you're talking very wildly," he said steadily. He was learning something now of women. His eyes sought hers and forced her into calmness.

"I'm crazy," she said; "I'm out of my mind; I don't know what I'm saying. Oh, please forget it—forget it."

Maxwell picked up the note.

"Now, Mrs. Whitford," he said—it was strange that her name had come to his lips in this fashion, for they had for a long time addressed one another familiarly by their first names, when they used any at all—"you can't stay here—you've got to go; I'll take care of this. It may not be your husband—the resemblance in names and handwriting may be accidental. I'll see this person; then I'll come and see you tomorrow. Ercilla is returning to you in the morning. You must say nothing about this to her—not a word. She and Charlie are to be married on Monday."

"They are!" Mrs. Whitford's lips

trembled. "But how are they after this?" she said. "Supposing—"

"I don't see why it should affect them. Even if the worst that you surmise is true, it can affect only you and the Major."

"It would all come out. He would never stand for it, even if I got a divorce. Everything is over in that quarter."

A look of absolute desperation settled on her face.

"Not necessarily. Won't you go now?"

She stood up. "You're a very masterful man, Blair. But aren't you cruel?"

For an instant the light that he had been glad to see in other women's eyes shown in Mrs. Whitford's, as she regarded him, but it met not the least response.

"Tomorrow at twelve I'll be at your house," he said. "Wait; don't step out until the elevator comes up."

Mrs. Whitford drew the hood of her cloak over her face. Maxwell descended with her and saw her to the cab. Returning to his rooms he studied the note carefully, glanced at his watch, then throwing on a short, thick coat, picked up a heavy walking stick and once more went down to the street. Half an hour later he got out of the Elevated at Chatham Square. It was not yet one o'clock, and the saloons and cafés were brilliantly lighted. Chinamen slinked past the portals to their garish quarter; the strident voice of music machines, laughter and singing sounded from back rooms. A policeman directed Maxwell to the lodging house.

"It's a pretty tough joint, mister," he said, "one o' the worst in the precinct."

Maxwell thanked him, and without comment walked on under the shadow of the Elevated. In a few minutes he found the place and ascended the dingy stairs to the second floor. There was a large common room with long tables and wooden chairs. On the latter were seated human wrecks of various ages and descriptions; some were asleep, some talking in low voices, for boisterous conduct or rioting is frowned on in such places—there are the streets for

that purpose. A burly hard-faced man greeted Maxwell as soon as he had entered the room.

"Good evenin'," he said, furtively looking at him from head to foot. He couldn't place this type exactly; he wasn't a police officer or a missionary.

"Good evening," returned Maxwell politely but curtly. "Do you know anyone here by the name of R. Milton?"

"Frien' of yours?" The little pig eyes glanced at him suspiciously.

"I want to see him."

"There he is." The man pointed to one of the sleeping figures, that of a tall, slender man seated immediately under the unshaded light, his bald head resting on his clasped hands.

Maxwell approached and looked down at him for an instant. There was still a trace of intelligence in the sodden, hopeless face, relaxed in sleep; maybe it was the way the scant gray hair was parted at the back and brushed forward toward the bald spot in military fashion. The aquiline nose, pressed out of shape against the table had a look of past gentility. The face was fairly clean shaven except for the bristling gray mustache. Maxwell touched him on the shoulder. He awoke at once.

"Well?" he grunted, straightening himself and rubbing at his deep set bloodshot eyes. "What do you want?"

"Did you write that?" Maxwell asked shortly. He put the note on the table, spreading it out.

"Oh, that's it, is it?" said the man, clearing his throat to get some of the hoarseness out of his voice. "May I ask who you are?"

"That's got nothing to do with it," returned Maxwell. "I asked you if you wrote this."

The two men looked at one another; the one in the soiled, much slept-in suit of clothes recognized in the other the look that class discerns at once, the gentleman look. And Maxwell, as he gazed at the evil, sodden face, still saw traces of it left. But they had no common meeting ground; all that had been swept away. The derelict attempted a smile and pushed back from the table.

"I asked you, my dear sir, who you were," he repeated.

"Which is something I haven't taken the liberty of asking you yet," Maxwell returned; "but I shall now. Are you R. Milton?"

"No, but I signed that name." He looked up and extended his hand. "I've got you now," he said. "Major Mills, I believe. Won't you sit down?"

Maxwell placed both hands behind his back.

"Oh, I don't blame you; under the circumstances, I don't know as I'd do it myself," continued the tall man. "You're quite right, quite right."

By this time the whole room was listening. The sleepers on the other side of the table had raised their bleary, drink-harrowed faces.

"I say," said Maxwell, "isn't there some place else where we can go and talk?"

"Well," said the other, "I'm not stopping at any club now, but there's a 'pub' downstairs, such as it is. I don't know anything about the champagne; the whiskey's rotten and the beer isn't above suspicion, but you can't spoil gin, so that's the best it affords. We'll adjourn there, eh?" Setting the example, he rose from the table.

Maxwell noticed that, although he endeavored to stand erect, it was half a minute before he could get his legs going. He knew the sign.

"It's got him, poor devil," he said to himself. "She wouldn't have long to wait."

It was a cheap, dirty place they entered, but as luck would have it there were very few at the dingy bar and no one sitting at either of the two greasy, stained tables.

"Now, I'll tell you," said Maxwell at the beginning, "I'm not drinking. But you can have anything—champagne, if you like."

"I'll take gin now," said the man; "champagne will come afterward."

He swallowed the raw, sweet-scented stuff without water, then settled back in the chair.

"Well, Major," he said, "I like the looks of you; you've got the proper cut.

No wonder she took up with you, if she had the money thrown in. It's a long time since I've worn a nice clean shirt like that. I should enjoy it."

"Better have another drink," said Maxwell. "It seems to put you in a pleasant frame of mind."

His companion chuckled faintly. "Not now," he said; "it'll keep. What are you going to do about it, Major?"

"I was thinking," said Maxwell. "Sometimes they get as high as five years for it."

"What do you mean?" The man glared at him.

"Attempted blackmail and extortion, Mr. Milton; that's what I mean."

"My name is not Milton." The man's voice had fallen back into its former gruffness. "At least, not all Milton; that's only the first part of it. My name's Whitford, ex-captain Bengal Lancers."

Maxwell laughed confidently.

"Oh, you thought I was dead!" sneered the man. "You don't believe me, do you? I'm her husband."

"I know Captain Whitford isn't dead," said Maxwell shortly. "And so does she—that's no news to us."

"Well, where is he, then?" The man leered at him; his voice had lost all traces now of its past culture.

"He's serving a sentence for forgery and theft somewhere," Maxwell returned. "It's well known that he wasn't drowned in the *Ariadne*; that's a story gotten up by his family. He's there now—unless he's out or escaped," he added; "but I haven't heard of it. In that way he may have avoided the papers served on him in the suit."

"What suit?" The man seemed to go all in a heap. His face was gray; he turned the empty glass in his shaking fingers till it dropped to the floor.

"We've come down to hard facts," Maxwell continued. "I mean the suit for divorce. Mrs. Whitford was born in this country and has resided here for years. I'd like to know," he continued, "what your game is, Mr. Milton; what are you trying to do? I stand pretty well with the police here; how about you?"

Whitford had recovered himself a little. "Look here, Major," he said; "when are you going to marry her? I saw it in the papers. That's the first inkling I had that she was in this country. I'd like to see the record of that divorce. The papers said—"

"You mustn't believe everything you see in the papers," Maxwell returned. "You're an Englishman, I take it."

"Oh, come now," said the other; "that's carrying things too far. You've played your hand too strong. You know I'm just what I said I am—you know it."

"Prove it," said Maxwell, "and I'll tell you what I'll do."

"What?"

"I'll have you arrested, and you'll go back where you came from, unless you've served your term out."

"By the lord Harry!" said the man, hitting the table. "I—"

"No; by steamer," interrupted Maxwell. "I don't think you like this country, anyhow. I think you'd do better down in South America. Tomorrow morning the *Caracas* sails to La Guayra."

"Oh, I know that hole, old man; I won't go there."

"Well, try it further along, then; try Puerto Cabello. There's a revolution in the neighborhood. Tomorrow morning a man will call here for you, and he'll have your ticket and five hundred dollars."

"Make it a thousand."

"Five hundred dollars—the captain will give it to you when you leave the ship. If you're found here tomorrow you'll go back to England, and you won't be given anything when you get there except your board and lodging. Of course there'll be talk, but what of that?"

"I'm beginning to think," said the other slowly, "that that's about all she'll get out of you. You're a pretty hard man, Major."

"Seems to me," said Maxwell, "that I've been rather generous." He smiled now.

It was strange that the scene that had begun so seriously was gaining a note of

comedy; but that was soon to be ended. "I suppose, old chap, you'll stand me another drink?" the older man asked weakly.

"Certainly," Maxwell returned. "Here's five dollars; you can pay for it yourself."

He threw the money on the table, and suddenly there came over him one of those strange revulsions of feeling that strong men often have. This was Ercilla's father he was talking to, insulting.

"I beg your pardon," he said, and picked up the money.

The other looked at him with some surprise.

"Oh, I'd have taken it," he said, "even that way. I'm a beaten man, Major. If you care to let me have it, I'll take it."

Maxwell handed him five dollars. Their hands almost met.

"I'm going to ask you a question," said the Englishman—again the lost tone came back to him. "My daughter—is she well? Is she happy?"

"Miss Whitford is very well, and very happy, I believe," Maxwell returned. "But she knows nothing of what we've just been talking about; she believes her father is dead. Her mother has kept her in ignorance of all the rest of it."

"Ah, indeed!" said the Englishman. "Major, I won't detain you any longer, as I see you're anxious to be going. What time does that steamer sail?"

"Twelve o'clock, I believe. You may expect to hear from me about nine or ten."

"Thank you. Good night."

"Good night."

As if they were two men not very well known to each other parting from a corner of the club lounge, they gave each other a semi-military salute. Maxwell pushed his way through the swinging doors to the street; the other, left alone, stood for a moment unsteadily and then staggered to the bar. "Gin—give me some gin, quick!" he said, flinging down the five-dollar bill. "Beaten, by Gad—I'm beaten!"

After a tossing, sleepless night Max-

well breakfasted in his rooms before eight o'clock in the morning. By nine he had secured a passage for "R. Milton" from the Red B. line of steamers, and half an hour later the Pinkerton man arrived. The conversation between Maxwell and him was short. He received his instructions without comment, and in twenty minutes, with five hundred dollars in American gold and enough to pay the passage money, he departed for the lower East Side lodging house. He was commissioned also to outfit his charge with clothing and necessities, and to inform him that fifty dollars would be found waiting for him on the first of every month at the German Bank in Puerto Cabello. A message was sent to Mrs. Whitford saying that Maxwell would be at her house by one o'clock.

For an hour Maxwell wandered aimlessly round his rooms. What Mrs. Whitford had said the night before kept recurring to his mind. What grounds had she for making such a statement—that Ercilla cared for him? He had tried to dismiss it, not to think of it. How dared she have said it? It probably came from a disordered condition of her mind, a condition natural under the circumstances, when every prop seemed to be giving away and all her hopes were crumbling. Certainly Ercilla herself had never shown him any evidence of it. He did not intend to look for it. But much depended upon the day and its outcome, and everything depended upon him. What was going to happen? Supposing his bluff had not worked? Supposing that Whitford had looked into the matter and found that his wife had not secured a divorce? What if he had called at the house? What if he had met Ercilla? Supposing the Major was there?

He was working himself up into a rather nervous condition. Although all the windows were open, the air seemed close and stifling. He concluded that he would go around to the garage and take his car out for a run up into the country. In his present state he would probably be arrested for speeding, but even the risk of that would distract him. He

was about to leave the room when he heard the click of a key in his outside door. To his surprise it was opened and the janitor of the building stood there.

"Oh, I beg pardon, sir," he said. "I thought as everyone was out. The telephone people have been calling you and saying you must have left your receiver off. I came up to see. Someone is on the wire for you now, sir."

"Oh," said Maxwell, "I switched it off myself—I didn't wish to be disturbed. But I'll answer it; thank you."

As the janitor withdrew, closing the door behind him, he went to the instrument. Who was it? Charlie? The Major? Mrs. Whitford? Ercilla? Or just some trivial and bothersome individual he did not care to hear from. He determined he would be Pym for the moment and state that his master was out, unless it proved absolutely necessary to disclose himself. He had often done this before. It only required a little preparation and a change of time and manner. But the voice at the other end was strange to him. Then he recognized it—O'Connor, the Pinkerton man whom he had entrusted with the mission of seeing Mr. "R. Milton" depart on the steamer.

Maxwell could not withhold his assent of astonishment as he answered.

"What? . . . No—no! . . . Early this morning! . . . The devil! You don't mean to say so! . . . Well, well! . . . In his room? . . . No, of course not. I don't wish to appear. . . . Isn't there someone down there who can take charge of it? . . . You're sure it's the right man? . . . Yes, yes; that's he. . . . Oh, the coroner, of course. . . . You'd better come up here, at once. . . . Any reporters been in there? . . . No, I understand; I suppose not. . . . All right. I'll wait here."

He hung up the receiver.

"Well, well!" he exclaimed to himself. "There is the end of that. Poor devil! Poor devil!"

The lodger, who went by the name of R. Milton, had been found dead in the bed of his little fifty-cent room; the night before he had changed from the

general dormitory and taken the best the house afforded.

The fact that he had breathed his last under those circumstances was nothing strange or new; hundreds of homeless, friendless men and women passed off that way every year. The usual course would follow—a short inquest, the city dead wagon, the potter's field, a nameless grave. Wouldn't it be best to let it all go that way? It would be heartless, pitiless; but heartlessness is often good worldly policy; pity is sometimes wasted.

He recalled to his mind the poor wreck of a once strong man. How he had deceived him—insulted him—sneered at him! But wasn't it all for the best the way things had worked themselves out? There was certainly no use in growing sentimental over it; everything was made much easier—very much easier.

Soon O'Connor came in. He put the money Maxwell had given him in the canvas bag down on the table, with a grin and a shrug of his shoulder.

"That's pretty well saved, sir," he said. "Oh, no, I didn't tell 'em anything about it. I just showed my shield and told 'em that I thought he might be a man who was wanted. Happens all the time down there. When I looked him over, I told them I was wrong, that I didn't know him or know anything about him. And I didn't, any more than you've told me. That's part of our business. We have to learn what *not* to find out; but if you were trying to rid yourself of any bother he was givin' you, you've played in great luck. They told me about a well dressed man calling to see him last night, who must have given him some money, for he drank two quarts of gin, all by himself. That's what did for him. Rotgut stuff—sheer poison. The empty bottles were in his room. If I were you I'd just let the case rest where it is."

"Thank you," said Maxwell; "maybe I will. If I need you again I'll let you know."

He picked up four or five of the gold pieces from the bag and placed them in the detective's hand.

"There's one worry out of the way," he remarked to himself as soon as he was alone. And yet there lurked in his mind the faintest suspicion of remorse. But how was he responsible? Yes, it was better just to let things go.

At one o'clock he was at Mrs. Whitford's. She had evidently done her best to repair the ravages of a distressed and sleepless night; but she was so nervous that she could hardly control her hands or features. Maxwell wondered, as he looked at her drawn face under the rouge, how he ever could have imagined her beautiful. On his way down he had determined to tell her the whole truth, but at sight of her he changed his mind. Again he repeated to himself his formula: "What's the use of explaining?" He fell back upon his usual dissimulation and lack of outspokenness. The use of half-truths had always amused him. He seldom lied unless it was absolutely necessary.

Mrs. Whitford fairly dragged him into the little drawing-room.

"Tell me," she said; "what has happened? Was it he? I have not closed my eyes once."

"First, let me assure you, dear lady," Maxwell returned, "there is nothing for you to worry over, not the least thing in the world."

"What do you mean?"

"Your husband's dead. You may rest assured of that fact."

"Then who was it? What did he want?"

"Money, I suppose, but he didn't get any; and you've nothing to fear from him. I consider the incident closed, as the politicians say. Where is *Ercilla*?"

"*Ercilla*? I don't know. She came back this morning. I saw her for a few minutes in my room, but I was too sick to talk. She's gone out again. You are sure, positively sure, of what you've been telling me?"

"Positive. It was through this man that I learned it."

"Who was he?" Mrs. Whitford's voice was very faint.

"He had been a soldier in a Lancer regiment. He'd known your husband—known everything about him; he inti-

mated that he was on board the transport. He began, of course, by insisting that he could prove that he was alive; but"—Maxwell paused—"he ended by proving just the other thing. He was after money, of course. I gave him five dollars. You'll never hear from him again; I'll pledge you my word on that. You're perfectly safe."

Mrs. Whitford began to tremble. Suddenly she sat down on the sofa and leaning sideways on the cushions began to cry, trying her best to repress the sound of her sobbing. Maxwell grew uncomfortable. He stood without speaking for a minute. Then he sat down beside her and took one of her hands.

"Mildred," he said, "don't go on in this way. Everything has worked out all right. Control yourself." He had no idea that Mrs. Whitford was a woman who could weep at all. Her total breakdown disconcerted him. He did his best to distract her, but she did not respond to his efforts, except that the fingers he held tightened on his. He could not withdraw his hand without using force; so he sat waiting for the paroxysm to subside.

Had he turned to the doorway he would have seen a strange picture. *Ercilla* Whitford stood there, her hands clasped together at her breast, her face pale, her lips open as if she were about to speak. Then suddenly she turned and stole noiselessly away. Going up to her room, littered with her half-unpacked things, she threw herself full length on the bed, hiding her own sobbing in the pillows.

After Mrs. Whitford had calmed herself Maxwell left the house. He walked aimlessly over toward the East Side. At a corner he bought the first edition of an evening paper. Standing on the street he opened it and searched the pages. As he was about to conclude that he would find no mention of what he sought a short paragraph caught his eye. It simply stated that an "unknown and friendless man, who went by the name of 'R. Milton'" had died at the Green Star Hotel, the name under which the dirty hostelry went. The coroner, whose name was mentioned,

had given a verdict of acute alcoholism. Maxwell tore out the paragraph, and going to a drug store looked up the coroner's address. He proved to be a German doctor with political affiliations, and as luck would have it, his office was in the neighborhood.

As soon as Maxwell had stated his business, which was, in fact, that he had known a man of the name as it appeared in the report, and that he thought it might be the same person, the little doctor showed some interest. Maxwell's description tallied with that of the dead man. The doctor gave him a note and also took the liberty to recommend the services of a person whom he called a funeral director. As Maxwell thanked him and was about to leave, the coroner stopped him. There had been found in the pockets of the dead man's clothes a gold seal ring with a crest and a photograph in a much worn leather case. He took them from the drawer of a desk and handed them over. The ring had the crest that was on Mrs. Whitford's writing paper; the photograph, although worn and stained, was that of a beautiful young woman, with a child of two years standing at her knee. It was Mrs. Whitford and Ercilla. Maxwell put both the ring and the case in his pocket.

The "funeral director" proved to be a man of resource. He would attend to everything: the purchase of a small single plot in a cemetery on Long Island, ordering the headstone, with the initials "M. W." on it, and the date. Would Maxwell attend the interment? Would he order carriages? If so, everything would be ready on the following day by eleven. Of course there had been the unpleasant task of identification at the city charnel house. But the coroner's note had made everything easy; no reporters were present.

The next day a hearse followed by one lone mourner in a hired funeral coach went over the bridge to the cemetery. After it was all over, for there had been no ceremony, Maxwell dismissed the lumbering closed carriage at the gate and came back to town by the Subway.

He had salved his conscience in the

matter; but why hadn't he told the truth? Why hadn't he told the truth in the beginning? He had been false all through—false to himself, false to the others.

He began to review a great many actions of his life. Had he ever been sincere, outspoken and frank? Seldom. Perhaps that was the reason he had no intimates, no confidants. He had always been self-centered; he had amused himself by playing the game. But had he played fair? He had paid his shot as he went along; he was paying it now. If he began to make amends in this case by explaining his real feelings, his position, his knowledge, he would only make a worse mess of it. It was too late to begin any explanations now—he had to go through with it; which reminded him that there was another ceremony that he had promised to look after—Charlie's wedding. It was to take place on Monday afternoon, at a little church just off the Avenue, where a fashionable clergyman often tied vagrant nuptial knots for unfashionable weddings. Before five o'clock he had made all arrangements for that, even to the decorating of the chancel with flowers.

Tired and depressed, from force of habit he sought the club. Charlie Gardner was there. The boy looked a little downcast.

"Strange thing," he said, "happened today. I don't understand it. Called to see Ercilla this afternoon at her mother's. She sent word that she was not well—too sick to see me. But that's not all. While I was there Major Mills called, and Mrs. Whitford sent down the same message. Hope there's been no trouble—that nothing has happened. You haven't heard anything, have you?"

"I?" said Maxwell. "Can't imagine what's the matter. Women are strange creatures. You'll learn that when you're more acquainted with them. I dare say everything'll be all right tomorrow."

"Hope so," assented Charlie. "Here's a list of people I've asked—only very intimate friends, you see. There'll be just twenty-four. I wrote Aunt Lydia, but I don't think she'll come on."

"No, I don't think so either," said Maxwell. "By the way, I arranged everything this afternoon, ordered all the flowers and trimmings."

Charlie took something out of his waistcoat pocket and twirled it in his fingers.

"I'm going to give this to you now, old man," he said. "You won't lose it, will you?"

Maxwell smiled at him and slipped the circlet on his watchchain.

"I say, Blair"—Charlie's voice shook a little—"you think I'm doing all right, don't you? You think I can make her happy."

"Why, of course you can," said Maxwell. "What are you talking that way for? Of course you can."

"Well," said the boy, shifting uneasily, "you see, I've got to win her yet; but you really don't think that she's taking me just because—"

"Because what?"

"Because there's nothing else for her to do?"

As Maxwell answered he did not look at Charlie's face. "My dear boy," he said, "if a man devotes himself seriously to the task of making a woman happy, and enjoys doing so, he generally succeeds."

"Provided, of course, old man, that she doesn't love somebody else."

"How very wise we're getting!"

"But you told me that yourself."

"Oh, did I? Sounds like one of my trite remarks."

Maxwell dismissed him with a slap on the back, and Charlie went out to the corridor. His cousin followed him with his eyes.

"I'm the biggest fraud that ever lived," he said to himself. "But it's too late to do anything now."

Seeing that he was alone, he took out the little photograph. The day was chilly and a fire was burning in the grate. He walked over toward the mantelpiece.

"I think that's the best thing to do," he said, still holding the case in his hand and looking into the flame. "Yes, that's the best thing to do."

It ended by his putting it back into his pocket.

Monday came at last. During the two days that had intervened since his last interview with Mrs. Whitford, Maxwell had seen nothing of her. He had caught a glimpse of Charlie and his fiancée walking on the Avenue. Charlie was talking and the girl was listening with a preoccupied air. Maxwell, who was passing in a cab, had drawn back out of sight, a feeling of remorse, regret and envy again gnawing at him, a hatred of himself mingled with it. "I've got to go through with it; I've got to—I've got to," he muttered.

Such a simple wedding had required no rehearsal, and Maxwell did not see any of those principally interested until he met them at the church. There were no bridesmaids nor ushers. A few college friends of Charlie's, some acquaintances of Mrs. Whitford and Major Mills, those were all. Maxwell had not asked anyone on his own account. The bride was dressed in a gray cloth traveling gown. The big bunch of flowers she carried were her only distinguishing mark. There was much whispered gossip among the few guests. Glances were often directed at Mrs. Whitford and Major Mills, who sat side by side in the first pew, and at Maxwell, who stood beside Charlie near the altar. He could not keep his eyes from Ercilla's face. She was so pale she was almost waxlike. The flowers she had kept trembling violently. Once she swayed a little as if faint. Maxwell involuntarily made a half-step forward. A tumult of feelings had possession of him; he felt himself trembling all over. In order not to show it he held himself stiffly, with his lips compressed. When it came to the question: "If any man know aught why this man and woman should not be joined together in holy matrimony, speak or ever afterward hold his peace," there followed the usual moment's silence. Ercilla, whose eyes had been lowered, raised them a little. Their glances met; not only met, but their eyes held each other for an instant. And there, with a rush of feeling that almost staggered him, Maxwell read the secret. She loved him! As plain as if her heart had cried to his, he read it. Yet

in that glance there had been an appeal, almost a beseeching cry for his pity, for his commendation. In their self-confession those dark eyes asked a question of him, a question he could not answer. "Oh, help me! Tell me," they seemed to say, "tell me that I am doing right—that I am doing what you wish me to!"

What his own glance had returned he did not know. He remembered an attempt he had made to smile, and then the ceremony went on to its conclusion.

The organ stopped playing as the wedding party gathered in the vestibule. The whispered, gossiping voices changed to the usual tones of forced gaiety and congratulation. Ercilla, still pale, went to her mother. Mrs. Whitford, pulling up her veil, kissed her on the forehead, and then after a second's hesitation on the lips. If the girl had responded it was very faintly. Charlie ran to Maxwell and seized his hand. "It's the beginning of my life, old chap," he said. "You're the best friend that I've ever had in all the world. I never would have had the courage but for you." He dragged Maxwell by the hand up to where his bride was standing beside her mother. Mrs. Whitford watched them both approach. She was the only one who heard what passed.

"Ercilla," said Charlie, "here's Blair, the best that ever lived, the best best man." He looked up at his cousin. "Kiss her, old chap; I want you to," he said.

The girl did not raise her head nor her eyes. Mrs. Whitford glanced from one to the other. Despite the sensation of triumph that she had felt for the last few minutes, her face went pale under her delicately applied coloring. Maxwell took Ercilla's hand, over which she had not yet drawn the glove, and where the gold circlet showed on her finger. The hand was icy cold. He bent slowly and kissed her on the forehead.

In another moment the whole party were walking down to the gates of the little enclosed space with its patch of green grass that surrounded the edifice. Charlie's big gray car stood by the gate; a few loiterers had assembled. There was some handshaking and expressed

good wishes; some of the guests had fallen to whispering again. There was some difficulty about opening the door of the car; the hook inside was fastened. Perfunctorily Maxwell, who was standing close, opened it for Ercilla to enter. With every effort at his command he controlled his voice and forced a smile again, extending his hand. Ercilla took it; once more their eyes met.

"Happiness, all happiness!" said Maxwell. His voice was hoarse and deep despite the smile.

"It was as you wished," the girl said. "Good-bye."

The car gave a shudder and a leap forward. Charlie waved his hand over the back of the tonneau, and they disappeared in the mazes of the traffic of the Avenue.

The little party broke up quietly and quickly. Maxwell jumped into a waiting taxicab, leaning well back in the seat so as not to be seen. His features were tense and drawn. As the cab trundled uptown he kept swallowing his own scalding tears. "It could not have been," he kept repeating. "It could not have been."

On the following Thursday Major Houghton Mills espoused the handsome widow at the same little church. There was more whispered gossip and quite a long account of it in the paper, but Maxwell was not there. The day before he had sailed for Europe.

It was April again, but not April of the next year, nor the next. Three years had passed. Blair Maxwell had not returned to America during all this time. India and Tibet had known him; his Saffari had pushed out for a year's absence from Nairobi; the Riviera and Monte Carlo had seen much of him. He had hunted in Leicestershire and dawdled about Paris.

On a sudden impulse one day, he had booked a passage on the *Mauretania* for New York. He had arrived in the city unheralded and had gone at once to a hotel. It was the Opera season. Feeling like a stranger who wished to kill a lonely evening, Maxwell bought a ticket. It was as good a place as any to pick up

the threads of the past, a method of announcing his return. Almost any of the boxes in the great horseshoe would be open to him if he cared to enter. It would be pleasant to be greeted again and welcomed. It had been his intention to announce himself to Charlie on the following day. In all this time he had received but two letters from his cousin. The first had stated that he was very happy, and that according to Maxwell's admonition he had never spoken to his mother-in-law about any financial matters. He reported that she was "going strong, and making a hit all along the line." Maxwell had smiled at this. He had hardly missed the twenty-five hundred a year toward the ex-widow's pin money from his own fairly comfortable income; trust companies are the holders of many strange secrets. It had been best to manage things that way after having implicated himself so far in the matter—he had no back thoughts about it.

It was the middle of the second act when he arrived. As he went through the Opera House corridor he ran across no one he knew. It rather amused him to go to his seat led by an usher, like a visiting stranger. As soon as he had seated himself he turned and surveyed the boxes—all the old faces, very slightly changed if at all, and of course some new ones. He himself had changed very little. He was grayer over the ears. His smooth shaven face was a little thinner perhaps. He did not feel any older; he had taken care of himself, had been as selfish as ever. At the end of the act he intended to begin his little tour of visits. He wondered if there were any who had missed him. The fact of not being missed was a thing that the habitual traveler becomes used to. People are so self-centered they have little time to keep track of other people's wanderings or absences. He could imagine the slight surprise and polite inquiry that would greet his ears—then in ten minutes he would have stepped back to the old life just as he had left it.

It had been rather mean of him, on the whole, not to have let Charlie know of his return; of course he would have to

see him and Ercilla. The thought of meeting her gave him a strange little shock as he recalled his discovery on the day of the wedding. There his self-conceit had not misled him; he had read things aright. Would he again have to play the part and not betray himself or his knowledge? He did not know. He had thought of her at times and tried to reason himself out of a sentiment that caused him true remorse and a sense of loss; but he had dreamed of her nevertheless—often, very often.

As he swept the row of grand tier boxes he suddenly gave a start.

There she was, sitting with one hand on the cushioned railing, the other playing with her fan. If he had thought her beautiful before, she was radiant now in her expanded womanhood. He caught a slight resemblance to her mother. He had not noticed it before; she was slighter, more delicate, but she had the same beautiful shoulders, the same royal poise of the head. Then Maxwell gave another start. In the opposite corner of the box sat Mrs. Houghton Mills, bediamonded out of all reason; a sparkling fenderlike thing on the top of her head made her look truly regal. Even at that distance Maxwell noticed that her hair was slightly gray. It gave her a dignity that added to her ripened beauty.

There were some black coats and white shirt fronts in the box. A tall good-looking young man stepping forward said something to Mrs. Mills and then turned to Ercilla. Maxwell saw the glance that passed between mother and daughter; it surprised him. He remembered their strained relations in the past; he recalled things that he knew and that no one else did. He kept staring at the box. Two of the black and white clothed objects had resolved themselves into Charlie and Major Mills; the former came up to the young man, who was now sitting between the two women, and bending said something to Mrs. Mills. She tapped him familiarly and playfully on his knuckles with her fan. They all laughed together now.

"Seem to be having a very good time," said Maxwell. "I don't think I'd

better intrude—it might call up painful memories.” During the entr’acte he strolled out into the corridor. Man after man stopped him and spoke to him. Some asked him where he had been; others behaved as if they’d seen him but the month before. Suddenly he saw Charlie approaching, his face flushed and eager. He had gained a little flesh, and despite his exuberant and boyish greeting he had an air of importance.

“Well, well!” he cried. “Somebody came in to Mrs. Mills’s box and said that he’d seen you out here. I didn’t believe it! What do you mean by it? Why didn’t you let us know?”

Holding Maxwell by the lapels of his coat, he piled question upon question. Maxwell replied dodging the direct answers: he’d come over so suddenly; he intended to surprise them—possibly he was going back. He had been on his way to the box when people had stopped him.

“Well, you’ve got to come back with me now,” said Charlie, who, despite the impossibility of concealing his joy, was really a little hurt. “We’re all here—I almost persuaded Aunt Lydia to come.”

“Aunt Lydia?” echoed Maxwell. “Good heavens!”

“She’s stopping with us now,” said Charlie—“out at my house in Westchester. She’s crazy about the baby.”

“Oh!” said Maxwell. “There’s a baby, is there?”

The respect that Charlie had retained for his cousin’s age had apparently dwindled; he looked at him reproachfully.

“Why, you silly ass,” he said, “I wrote you all about it. Didn’t you get my letter?”

“It probably missed me,” said Maxwell. “I never got it. Oh, is this your box?” They had paused at the door.

“For heaven’s sake, man,” said Charlie, “don’t make that break about not knowing about the baby. We named him after you.”

“Did you?” said Maxwell. “That’s mighty nice of you. They know I’m here, do they?”

“Certainly,” said Charlie; “I was told to find you. Go in.”

Maxwell stepped through the narrow curtained entrance into the full glare of the brilliant lights. The first to greet him was Major Mills, who, standing up, shook hands with a rather constrained heartiness. Maxwell turned from the Major to his wife. How well she did it, how magnificently she carried it off! were his first thoughts. Her hand was extended; there were several new jewels on her fingers—he knew most of the old ones by heart, as it were. Her graying hair was certainly becoming; she had a dignity, a perfect air of being well placed, well cared for, well surrounded. There was a placidity about her that he had never noticed before; the nervousness, the tenseness had disappeared. There was kindness and perfect satisfaction, too, in the tones of her greeting.

“Well, stranger,” she said as she extended her hand, “so you’ve come back at last! We were beginning to forget what you looked like, weren’t we, Ercilla?”

She smiled at her daughter as if to remind him of her presence. He was putting off turning to her, in order better to prepare his expression—for anything that might happen.

“Well, I can hardly say *that*,” replied Mrs. Gardner with a laugh, “but I was afraid that he had forgotten me entirely.”

“Forgotten you!” He took her hand and looked at her. The dark eyes replied to his without a trace of anything but the friendliest feeling. Her face had flushed a little, but so far as Maxwell could read he might have been a casual friend whom she was really glad to see. Could this young woman be Ercilla—that independent, wonderful young creature who had suddenly blossomed into his heart, and whose secret soul life he had felt was tied up with his in that romantic relation of the unspoken word? He could hardly imagine it. His perturbation kept him silent; it was Ercilla herself who began to put him at his ease. She motioned to the chair behind her and he drew it up close to hers.

“In the first place,” she smiled, “I’m

going to take a cousinly privilege and begin by calling you Blair."

Great heavens, she was actually patronizing him! Maxwell remembered how once before when she had spoken to him he had felt a sense of littleness, but now he made an effort to catch directly her glance, to see if she was playing, concealing anything. No, her gaze was frank and friendly and amused. She spoke of his silence for the past three years, his neglect to write. But now that they had got hold of him, she said, they would keep him for a little while—he'd have to stay. With the airy manner and the slight blush of young mothers referring to their first offspring she said:

"You will have to come out and see that young man, your namesake, won't he, Charlie?" She looked up at her husband.

Maxwell almost gritted his teeth. If Charlie began patronizing him, too, he would flee or say something desperate. Once Charlie's attempts in that direction had amused him. But the proud young father patronized the absent member.

"Oh, he's a pretty good little kid," he said, "only he's rather short on hair."

Mrs. Mills, leaning forward, attracted Maxwell's attention. As he turned he tried to force from her face, from her glance, any acknowledgment of a past, a secret understanding; he hoped for a mental elbow touch that would put things in the position where he would understand himself. He drew a blank covert. It was only real friendliness, a note of absolute security in herself, he caught; it made her words seem almost commonplace.

"You must have lots to tell us," she said. "Why have you been away so long? Now, come, explain yourself."

"Oh," returned Maxwell, "there's nothing to explain; I'm not very good at that, so what's the use? I've been knocking round in my own aimless fashion."

"Isn't it about time you settled down?"

He gazed at her in perplexity. Was she playing, or had all the past and its complications been nothing but a

dream? He was impelled to make a call on her memory by making a blunt remark or asking a subtle question, but delicacy forbade him doing either.

"Oh, I may some day," he said.

Somebody came into the box just then, interrupting further talk. Maxwell stood aside. He smiled to himself. He was no more necessary to these people than if he'd never existed. And yet how different the whole current of their lives would have been if it had not been for him! Yes, it had all worked out. He had said that to himself many times. But now he felt a little piqued, a little hurt in his own conceit. He looked at all four of them. Charlie, who was just reaching for the opera glasses that lay in Ercilla's lap—everything was well with him; he'd won, as Maxwell had said he would. Ercilla, sitting there so radiantly happy, could certainly never be the girl with the waxlike face, whose eyes had sent him that message in the midst of the marriage service, whose marble brow he had kissed and who had muttered those words to him when she had said good-bye. No, he must have been mistaken, misled; his conceit had played him false.

He glanced at Mrs. Mills. Was it she? Was it the woman with whom he had fenced and drifted and pretended? Had she ever made claims on him for anything? He had never supposed that she could ever be like this. Gracious, she was a grandmother! Soon perhaps she would be knitting, with little children about her knee begging for a story. What would she tell them? Nice little grandmotherly, goody-goody stories, Maxwell was sure. Oh, the secrets, the secrets that live in the past lives of people, that are buried forever in the catacombs of their minds! What a mistake it was to think that memories and recollections were haunting ghosts! Maxwell was learning again; perhaps it was only women who had this gift. He felt a little tug on his sleeve. It was the Major. He looked younger and more rubicund than ever. He positively exuded the joy of living. Had Maxwell known it, the predominating thought in the Major's mind for the moment was that of an ex-

ultation mingled with pity—pity for Maxwell. It must be hard, this meeting, seeing the one he had lost in all her glory and redundancy of charm and person. Poor old Maxwell! The Major had explained his long disappearance in his own way to himself, and often late in the evening at the club to his friends.

"I say, old chap," the Major murmured, "don't you want to go round to the Opera Club and have a snifter? The curtain will go up in a moment—next act awfully stupid."

Nobody was making very much fuss over him in the box; his presence didn't seem very necessary. So Maxwell nodded to the Major and they walked out into the corridor. The little military man took him by the arm.

"There's nothing like it," he began, "nothing, old chap, believe me."

"Nothing like what?" Maxwell answered.

"Married life," returned the Major. "You take my advice."

Maxwell interrupted him.

"Damn it all, Mills," he said, "are you going to flaunt your happiness in my face? As the English say, 'that isn't cricket, is it?'"

"Pardon me," returned the Major. "I didn't mean to, but I couldn't help it."

"That's very evident," said Maxwell.

They had their libation in silence. The Major was thinking that Maxwell had been really touched up by the sight of his partner in life. He magnanimously respected the other's desire for silence. And Maxwell was reviewing the whole thing, the everything that the others seemed to have forgotten or did not know—the lonely grave with the initials on it in the Long Island cemetery, the look in a woman's eyes, the words on a woman's lips. Had it all happened? He felt in his pocket for a ring that he had carried at the end of his chain. Then he remembered how once in an impulse he had dropped it over the steamer's side in the Indian Ocean. It might some day have called for an explanation, so he got rid of that necessity.

The Major suddenly made a remark that rang in with his thoughts. "Life's

a funny thing," he said. "Do you remember—"

"No," interrupted Maxwell rather brusquely, "I don't think I remember anything."

The Major looked across the table at him and held his peace. He had no idea that Blair Maxwell would be such a bad loser.

"Gad, how much he must have cared!" he thought. His magnanimity was multiplied. "I say, old chap," he asked kindly, "are you going to be over here long?"

"Sailing back next Saturday," returned Maxwell.

"So short as that?"

"Yes; nothing to keep me over here, you know."

"But you'll come in and say good-bye to us, won't you?"

"Thanks—it's very kind of you. Don't let me keep you if you're going back to the box. Just tell them that I had to leave early, won't you? Good night."

The Major looked back as he walked away. "Poor old chap!" he said compassionately. "Life is a funny thing."

Blair Maxwell sitting alone smiled cynically at the carpet. It had all worked out—yes, it had all worked out. He was responsible; it was all his doing—every bit of it. And yet he was the loneliest person in the world, a monument of ineffectuality, the very embodiment of the insincere. What was left to him? Nothing but to kill time and amuse himself in doing nothing. All at once a new idea came over him. Why, secretly in their hearts everyone must feel grateful to him—Charlie, Ercilla, Mrs. Mills, the Major. This was worth something, anyway.

Then he thought of the boy they had named after him. Yes, he'd go and see him; he'd go up some day. By gad, he'd play straight with *him*! He'd try to make *one* friend whom he could look in the eye and speak out without keeping back unspoken thoughts. As to the others, everything would have to go unexplained to the end. Perhaps, if he went on playing long enough, he might

be able to forget as they had. It might all grow to be real. What an intriguing, selfish, self-centered beast he had been! Always using others, avoiding responsibilities, never allowing his better, his real self to be seen—just seeking the easiest way out!

The Major's trite remark came to him.

"Yes," he said, lighting a cigarette, "life is a funny thing. It's like a book; but it's not what's written there—it's what you bring to it. They're all happy—I'll try to chime in."



DREAMS I BANISHED FROM MY DOOR

By WILLIAM ALEXANDER CARUTH

DREAMS I banished from my door—
 So you have returned once more,
 Come again to peer and scold,
 Worse than ever wolf or cold!
 In with you! The hearth is fired,
 Table spread, and I am tired—
 Tired of hearing your implore,
 Dreams I banished from my door!

Dreams I banished from my door,
 Take me at luck's ebb once more;
 Pledge my wine and break my bread;
 Make me guest and comforted!
 What betide if store be light—
 Shall tomorrow starve tonight?
 Welcome! Let it blow or pour,
 Dreams I banished from my door!

Dreams I banished from my door,
 Fill the glass for Glad Up roar!
 Do my neighbors drive you off?
 Do they laugh at you and scoff?
 Do they say—"Such dreams are his;
 So he fancies, so he is"?
 We can bear all this and more,
 Dreams I banished from my door!

Dreams I banished from my door,
 You have knocked so oft before—
 Is there neither roof nor heat
 Otherwhere on all the street?
 Welcome! If their tale be true
 That I'm fool to succor you,
 You have paid me back full score,
 Dreams I banished from my door!

POSTER EFFECTS IN FICTION

By HELENA SMITH DAYTON

THE GREAT CLAPTRAP MYSTERY

DESERTED house . . . Flash of light . . . Board creaks . . . Sound of struggle . . . Papers intact . . . "I knew you were innocent of the crime!" she said proudly.

THE MAN WITHOUT AN OVERCOAT

Park bench . . . Bare trees . . . Woman in furs . . . Man without an overcoat . . . Both: "You!"

HER CAREER

"No, Bob." . . . Hall bedroom . . . Pile of rejected Mss . . . Weak tea and boiled egg . . . One year elapses . . . "Yes, Bob."

MILLICENT

Ocean liner . . . Moon . . . "One has to do something to while away the time" . . . Dinner at the Carlton, London . . . Tea at the Pré Catelan in the Bois . . . "It must be 'Good-bye,'" she said . . . Fifth Avenue, six months later. "Who was that man to whom you just bowed, Millicent?" asked her husband. "A ship acquaintance," replied Millicent.

THE OTHER WOMAN

A genius . . . The wife with a fancywork soul . . . Wife calls on the Other Woman . . . The Other Woman, alone once more, slowly pulls rose to pieces petal by petal . . . Fire dies in grate.

PENELOPE ELOPES

White satin gown, empty . . . Diamond necklace . . . Package of letters tied with blue ribbon . . . Waiting guests . . . Messenger boy . . . Back stairs . . . Waiting taxi or biplane.

A SUMMER IDYL

At first he thought she was a nymph of the woodland . . . Days drift by . . . The artist remembers his proud mother in Boston . . . Heartache for two . . . Finds he cannot live without this sweet child of nature . . . Returns . . . She isn't there . . . Despair of artist . . . Scene: the smartest affair of the season. Queenly creature with pearls is his lost nymph . . . "Tuesdays in February."

PAULA'S RED HAIR

By AURA WOODIN BRANTZELL

AS a problem in psychology, Paula Paulson is a poser. No woman should ever be an enigma to another. Each should be able to plumb the other's depths with her own line. But I plead guilty; I have not fathomed Paula.

She is delicious. With red hair or yellow or whatever color she might choose, still she is delicious. I, who have known her in both red and yellow reincarnations, as it were, may speak convincingly.

It is not a bit difficult to understand why a woman will change the color of her hair. If it were modish, or even customary, to wear as many different hues of hair as a chameleon can offer, women would change it as often and enthusiastically as they suit the caprices of their feminine minds in the matter of the tints of their gowns. Nor should it be a hard riddle to answer why any woman should change the color of her hair from wonderful real golden if the result be a mass of glorified red—especially if the exchange renders blue eyes a marvelous sea green; eyes reflecting the ever changing tints of the ocean are confessedly the most fascinating in the world.

But to make a man fall in love with her for and by her red hair, marry him, and then to wipe the little matter of the change from her consciousness as entirely as if she had never been yellow—well, that is a part, at least, of the poser.

It is never hard to keep a secret from a man. It is what every woman knows is wise, if it's one's own secret and would make a difference. Billie Paulson is quite one of the most charming fellows in New York. Furthermore, he is mad

about Paula and her beauty and wild over her red hair. He thinks her the prettiest, the most adorable being in the world. He raves over her hair and her skin; he helps her choose her clothes to make the most of the halo of autumnal sunshine about her head; he pets her, spoils her, worships her; and he is perfectly frank about confessing that it was the magnificence of her hair that won his admiration at first and held it until he gave her his love. And she is delicious, utterly without sense of humor at the situation; explains when she loses her temper that it is because she is red-headed and therefore high-spirited. Memo. Take a bowl of dioxygen and ammonia; thoroughly saturate the scalp and two inches of hair next scalp. Make thick paste of henna and carmine, and lay it on hair next scalp. Leave on hour or two. Rinse two or three times and then shampoo well. Warranted to produce red hair (with temperament according); but if one does not break a few mortal laws after a few years of it, one will certainly be hairless.

For you see Paula is a convert of one of the latest and most fashionable cults. She eschews all that is Mortal in mind and lives only in the Truth about herself and reflects Love. She told me, when I asked her about her hair and Billie, that its being yellow was a part of her past when she lived a slave to Mortal Laws; that her body, including her hair, is but a Mortal Belief, and her Belief is red now. She has learned that there is neither Past nor Future. She is living in the Eternal Now, which is red, and she repudiates her yellow past utterly. Moreover, what concerns the body has no place in Mind. Her

body is but a Mortal Husk and of no consideration whatever.

I hesitated about asking her as to the matter of clothes. I think that she is too extravagant for Billie's income; thirty-five dollars each for a half-dozen hand-embroidered waists which her dress-maker will not touch under twelve or fifteen dollars each. Quite a consideration, I reflected, and I think that Billie thought so, too, from the expression of his face when she mentioned them. But, at any rate, it is none of *my* consideration how she clothes her Husk. I have all I can do to attend to the covering of my own.

Moreover, the Eternal Now has gobbled up the Past when we were at school—dramatic school—in Chicago together. The big burg of Chicago even has ceased to exist. Of course, it is a matter of actual geographical knowledge that to real New Yorkers there is no civilization west of the Hudson. But Paula was born in Kentucky and lived all her life in the South and West until three years ago. I have understood, however, from those who know, that people of that sort make the most rabid New Yorkers there are.

She was in a convent in Louisville for several years after her mother died until she reached her majority; then, having received her mother's share of the family estate in addition to what was hers from her father at his death, she went to Chicago to prepare for the stage. When I first met her she was as alone and lonely as any slim, yellow-haired, innocent-eyed slip of a maid could be in Chicago until anyone who would might gather her in. Ignorant and innocent, open to any sort of attention and flattery, she was just a spoiled, silly little convent girl. Her sisters—she had three, all married and well married—were highly incensed because their mother had favored her in the will instead of making equal division, and so they ignored her existence. Shy, pretty as a flower, she badly needed a guide, companion and friend. We were room-mates and schoolmates. We studied, larked and were wise and foolish virgins together. Three years it has been since

Paula came East, became red-haired, Billie Paulson fell in love with her and married her, took her for a six months' cruise and brought her to this charming apartment in the West Eighties. In that time she had been cleansed of the dear wise and foolish virgin days and her memories of the Mortal Past. And the Infinite Now has wiped out Chicago!

Billie, too, is a member of the cult. His ideas demonstrate less venom of effect, but he is still deeply enough in love with Paula to be absorbed in being cleansed of all earthly earthiness as she wants to be. I was with them three weeks before I met a man. I went to the meetings and lived in Truth all that time before I even saw one worth a look. And then he was so denaturalized by Truth that he was beyond the wiles of women. Not that I am so enamored of the sex; but an evening with a clever man will restore one's mental equilibrium though badly shaken. It's a tonic. And I had come to need just that. That is what I told Billie. It is absurd for me to think of giving up all worldly thoughts. Billie says that worldly thoughts are not given up; they give one up, as one advances in Truth. I replied that when I got to where I didn't want to flirt I wanted kindly death to remove me; and Billie would not even let me hold to that consoling thought. There is no death in Truth, you know.

It must be most agreeable to have no stinging regrets for the past, no fear for the future, no punishment for one's peccadillos. But it is going far to be able to wipe out memory while one is lucid, still at large, as it were. One evening, apropos of a recent *cause célèbre* I remarked that people were so foolish to talk to reporters; that utter silence is the only means of routing them. Paula remarked that she "was simply worried to death at the time of our marriage by the reporters who flocked to the house. I refused to see any of them, but Billie—oh, he made me so mad. He talked to them and gave them cigars."

I was not feeling particularly good. I'd been to meetings twice that day. I ached to ask her if her distaste for re-

porters was not really fear that someone would recognize her as a former chorus girl of the "Willful Winnie" company. Be it to my eternal credit, I kept my tongue where it belonged, between my teeth, fled to my room and took a tubbing, which always restores my good humor, and asked myself just how big a fool she really thinks me.

You see, I know all the details of that little affair. Paula wrote me in her worry. Billie never dreamed that she had ever been on the stage. He saw her for the first time at a swell dance at the St. Regis, to which she was taken by a friend of her grandaunt from Louisville, who was visiting one of the patronesses. There Billie fell in love with her red head. She had then left the Winnies and was at the Martha Washington. She had gotten tired of one-night stands and was in love with New York. When they were married the New York papers published a story that Billie Paulson had wed a pretty chorus girl. Billie was simply furious. He made them eat every word of it. Denied it *in toto*; and Paula never opened her head! Wasn't she wonderful? And she never has!

Doubtless now she has played her little role so long that she really believes it is her own. One cannot help but admire her. Long ago, in some marital moment of fatal confidence, I'd have admitted that I made my hair. I'd have talked; I couldn't have helped it. But Paula leaves her life a perfect blank from the time she left Louisville at twelve until she met Billie in New York at twenty-two. Chicago, the Winnies, never were. I'll admit it is possible for so many things to happen which would make it unnecessary for her ever to tell the truth; and as Talleyrand says, "Everything happens," why bare her soul until necessity arises?

What goes to my heart is to hear her repudiate good and true friends of the old days. Martin Watson told me last year in Chicago that he saw her in a shop, and that he was convinced that she recognized him but that she glanced the other way to avoid his greeting. Martin was one of our kindest friends of the old

wise and foolish virgin days. He said he supposed that Paula regarded her friends as she did her gloves, to be used and then thrown away when shabby. Not that he was or ever will be shabby. He has played too many successes the past ten years for that. But Paula impresses one as having become a great swell. Sometimes I think she is even trying it on me, of all people! I excused her to him as best I could, but I am afraid she did see him. He is not the only one she has ignored. And at dinner one night, when we spoke of Martin, I heard Billie ask her if she had never met him, and she said no. I said nothing. It hurt, when I thought of how many mortal meals she had eaten at his expense.

A day or so ago Miss Keller, a friend of Paula's, asked us to go shopping with her and have lunch at a downtown hotel. Paula would not go. She says that the hotel is not select enough. And her red hair attracts too much attention. Mr. Bulkley, a young sculptor whom Miss Keller brought to call upon us, has dubbed her the Beauty, to her endless delight. Yes, Paula is beautiful. He raves over the way her skin harmonizes with her hair, how lovely her long, narrow eyes are, of the gradual, delicate, upward curve of her nose, so distracting, and her mouth, charming, red—and always of her glorious hair. That she has neither carriage nor figure one forgets, gazing at the enchanting beauty of her face. She has homely hands, not a bit Southernly aristocratic; her feet are flat, her ankles such that she was kept in the back row of the Winnies for months, until she was promoted for her face to the front ranks. I am trying to be modest about my own attractions. Paula's hair does attract instantly. But there have been people who looked at me twice, though only red hair is permitted to attract. Mr. Bulkley is very nice. I like him. I shall take revenge upon her in but one way. I shall tell him, upon his sacred word of honor of course, never to reveal the awful secret to Billie or anyone that she makes her hair. I shall not, however, do this until I am driven to it.

It is not painful, this irritation of mind; it only inhibits enjoyment and holds one's sense of honor at bay. Hammerstein's, the Hippodrome, even Broadway is common. Paula does not like to be on the street daytimes without Billie to protect her. She dreads the attention her red hair attracts. We went to her milliner's one day and had to transfer at Forty-second and Broadway, and Paula nearly had a fit. She hates to come in contact with the vulgar throng which stare at her. The Great White Way, whose very thought I love, is the Great Taboo. In "our set" it is not nice to be seen there, except at night *en route* to the theater. I think that I am hypnotized. Soon I shall confuse Central Park with the Bowery and fear to be seen on the street unveiled. It's too absurd!

As we were coming out of the theater the other night I saw Lee Lambert. I had simply to fight myself to keep from calling to him. I knew that it meant passes galore, all we could use. And I wanted to see him, too. In the old days we would have thrown figurative arms about his neck and kept them there until he took them away full of passes to everything in town. But I dared not recognize him; big as he looms in the theatrical world, it is a disgrace to know any of "the profession." Paula says she did not see him.

Last night we went to hear Mary Garden sing Melisande, Billie, Paula, Mr. Bulkley and I. We approach Truth more nearly when listening to beautiful music, even though we cannot approve of the morals of the stage. We stopped at Sherry's for supper. As we slipped from our wraps I noticed a waiter flit by with a champagne cooler. I longed for a glass of mortal wine, but I felt that I would not dare to pander thus to my appetites. I was hungry, mortally so. I was happy; my gown was new and becoming. I had to recall myself to the Truth with a jerk.

Paula was a dream in a pale green frock that matched her eyes. Never did she more deserve the name, "the Beauty." Once in a while Paula's dressmaker manages to conceal the un-

gainliness of her unsatisfactory figure by long lines of grace and sinuosity, and the green is one of those clinging, graceful successes. Everyone stared at her when she dropped the fluff of her opera cloak from her white shoulders, emerging like a brilliant flower upon a slim green stem. She preened herself quite mortally for a few minutes while the rest of us admired her with our eyes and stayed modestly in the atmosphere of Eternal Consciousness, waiting until she was ready to join us. An orchestra was playing seductively. It called to all that was mortal in me, the scent of the perfumed air, too, the gilding and glitter and glamor of it. It was beautiful, though mortal, and soothing, too.

Soothing until into the Eternal Now to Paula, consciously and complacently studying the menu, and to Billie and Mr. Bulkley and me in our background admiring her, was projected a missile from out that obliterated Past. It was slim and it was exotic and decidedly, unmistakably theatric, Titian as to hair under a huge, beplumed hat, rouged as to cheeks and as to Cupid's bow lips charmingly emphasized, penciled as to crescented eyebrows, ringed as to slender, white ungloved fingers, shining and jetted as to melted-to sheath gown which trailed and fluffed and wound around and about little feet in high-and-hazardous-as-to-heels shoes.

It flung itself at Paula, gurgling and gushing, and had kissed her upon each cheek before I recognized Marcia Marlinspuyke, the leading lady of the Winnies, from her likeness to posters. It squealed little shrieks of rapture and delight at seeing her dearest, darling Polly again after such an eternity of time spent endlessly and utterly futilely without her, entreating the bliss of being introduced to her dearest, darling Polly's adorable Billie—consciously dropped big eyes all the time swimming enchantingly from Billie to Mr. Bulkley, to decide which one of them was Billie—whom she had read in the newspapers that her dearest, darling Polly had captured. If it noted that her dearest, darling Polly had chilled at the first glimpse of it and was freezing, freezing,

frozen hard and cold and icy as she sat silent, it heeded it not but prattled guilelessly on.

All might possibly have gone off comfortably had not another something projected itself from that obliterated Past of Paula's and made itself a potent, pregnant part of the Eternal Now. This was a rotund, rubicund, laughing man with twinkling, brown eyes fringed by enormously long dark lashes. Those lashes, I remember how I envied him them, above all the confusion and amazement and Billie's and my best society smiles and Mr. Bulkley's well bred ignoring of the scene and Paula's frigidity and our desire to avoid becoming conspicuous, which was so intense that I could actually *feel* it emanating from Billie to me, begging me to do my best to keep up a good face.

The rubicund something following in Miss Marlinspuyke's wake was beaming at someone at our table, and suddenly I knew that it was coming to make more trouble, but unconsciously, just as the fair Marcia was doing all that she could to be nasty consciously. He sailed up to Paula with an outstretched hand of unmistakable welcome, called her "dear little Polly," and held the limp hand which he had grabbed from Miss Marlinspuyke and held to it and held—and held—and held. And then his eyes alighted on Paula's hair, radiating gold red gleams 'neath the sparkling lights from the big chandeliers, a band of chaste pearls wound in and out of its glittering curls and puffs and braids.

"Polly—Polly," he said reproachfully, and with tones full of genuine regret, "you've made your beautiful yellow hair red since you left the Winnies. You had the prettiest hair in the world, my dear. I know," apologetically, "it is not just proper to mention such things; it is magnificent—and say, you sure look no end swell all around—"

And just here Miss Marlinspuyke broke in with a nasty little laugh. "Ah, Holly," she said to him, "we all come to it." And she added an aphorism: "After peroxide, the henna!" Then, turning to Paula: "Did you know that Holly and I had tied up? And—he has

quit flirting with my chorus girls now; we've some mighty pretty ones, too, these days. You were always too skinny for tights, dearie."

Billie and I both had been so overwhelmed by the catastrophe that we had had thoughts for only what the woman and man were saying. But suddenly I looked at Paula. Her eyelids were drooped so that her eyes were hidden. Her face was quite white. Her lips quivered faintly and pathetically at the corners and then moved. Then she quite calmly and unsmilingly looked up at Miss Marlinspuyke, then at her companion. It was an impersonal stare, the look one has for a servant who casually attends one, the look one reserves for that portion of the world to which one is so absolutely indifferent it could go to pot in the flicker of an eyelash and one would not put forth a rescuing hand, a look harboring neither resentment nor interest, just the look one sees in the eyes of the blind. So far as *she* was concerned, these intruders simply were not, unless one considered them atmosphere. In that look she consigned them to any state of innocuous desuetude such ciphers were likely to seek. She washed them from her little slate; they were wiped from the map of her world—piff, pouf, vanished!

All that I remember further is a general haziness in which Miss Marlinspuyke and her husband faded into the crowd and were gone, while we went on with our bit of wineless supper to the music of the orchestra in the heart of the glamor and glitter of the café. And when we went forth into a night of lights and glimmering stars and glaring street lamps, in its midst our taxi shut in three people, at least, who were trying to swim out of the deluge.

From the dusk within I was trying to invoke answers to the questions I found myself industriously putting to myself. What was Billie going to say to Paula? What was he thinking now of her? What explanation would she endeavor to make? She had lied to him; she had deceived him. He had discovered it all. What would he do? Be hurt or angry or forgiving or hard? Did he think her jus-

tified? Was she justified? How could she reconcile her different stories? Chief of all, what would Billie think of it all? My heart quaked within me. I determined to go any lengths to help her out. If a woman feels that she must deceive her husband, her women friends ought to stand by her, I suppose. They never do, of course, but they ought to. And I always had stood by Paula. I always meant to.

Billie handed us out, Paula and me, and we took the elevator up ahead of him and Mr. Bulkley, who remained below to talk to the taxi driver. We stood outside of the apartment door and waited until they came up. Paula discussed the opera with me and Miss Garden's singing and the women's gowns as unconcernedly as though the Damoclean sword above her swayed from a cable instead of a hair.

Mr. Bulkley came in and stayed for a few minutes, but he was ill at ease, as were we all—all, that is, except Paula. She was most admirably uplifted as regarded the little episode of the evening and remarkably self-possessed. For my part, I could look at no one but her; she mesmerized me. She was as far from worry and embarrassment as though Miss Marlinspuyke, the Winnies, Holly and red hair had never really existed, as she plainly meant us to think that they had not for her.

But for Billie they were a reality in connection with the Eternal Now, and their message to him a potentiality no longer to be ignored. He appeared *distract*, silently absorbed in his thoughts. When Mr. Bulkley said good night he fairly shooed him out, and as the door closed behind him, turned impatiently to Paula. His "Well?" implied so much that my skin crept.

Paula, who had slid carelessly upon a *chaise longue*, linked her hands with elaborate self-possession above her head. Then she yawned, stretched gracefully, brought her hands from behind her head and slipped a pearl bracelet up and down on her arm. She had begun to appear conscious. But she never answered; just absorbed herself in trying to seem unconscious.

I was so overflowing with pent-up excitement that my teeth were almost chattering. I felt that I ought to turn and run to bed and leave them to scrap it out, and yet I was so anxious to hear from Paula how she extenuated herself, I could not have pried myself from the situation with a jimmy. Silence fell like a brick house upon us all. Billie just sat and looked at Paula—and looked and looked. I watched them until I could bear it no longer. It became frightfully embarrassing.

I rose with an unconcern not my own but borrowed from Paula, who had so much, and said good night. As I did so, Paula moved her head uneasily on the cushioned back of her chair and half raised herself and answered me good night. But Billie never heard me; for him I was not.

I started toward the door, catching my cloak from a chair. The tragic atmosphere overweighted my surcharged feelings. The wrath and chagrin in Billie's face were unbearable. Billie *has* a temper.

Before I had gone halfway across the room Paula spoke. Was it a plea for forgiveness? Would he take her tenderly in his arms and forget? I would be too tactful to turn about and see. My heart fluttered with apprehension. Would he be too furious? What was it she had said? Could I believe my hearing, which is generally good?

"*We had such a nice evening, didn't we, dear?*" quoth Paula, with appropriate emphasis.

With my hand upon the door knob, a sudden cyclone of laughter swept me about. Billie was lying back in his chair. He was laughing! He was ha-ha-ing consumedly, chortling, shaking from his head to his toes. He laughed until the tears ran down his face, which had purpled with restrained mirth. He laughed until he could not sit up.

I was astounded. I looked at Paula. Her face was a study. Utter amazement was the chief emotion written there. Her green eyes had blackened with wonderment. She stood up suddenly, her pose of self-righteousness a

rag. She would have been shocked to know that her mouth was wide open.

"What *are* you laughing at, Billie Paulson?" Her eyes were blazing with anger; hurt surprise, vanity, were in every inflection of her voice. Her red hair sprang Medusa-like from her head. She fairly choked with fury.

Billie did not answer. He only laughed harder, and by this time I was laughing, too, thanking the gods that he possessed a sense of humor. It had saved the day.

Paula gathered all the dignity she had to her rescue and turned from him. Billie, watching, laughed anew. Hearing, she fled precipitately for her chamber door. Billie's laugh followed her. A sharp slam punctuated his mirth. Billie shouted with laughter loud enough to penetrate the closed door. The lock snapped viciously and when Billie could articulate, he remarked confidently that it was a pity that Paula had "such a temper—her red hair, of course."



AN EGYPTIAN LOVE CHARM

By GERTRUDE HUNTINGTON McGIFFERT

CARVEN with curious symbol and mystic sign,
Enwrapped in tissue of gold, as in a shrine,
It lay in a sandalwood casket wrought with pearl
And rare chased ivories.

What slim, dark girl,
What cherished love of king or caliph wore
This delicate trinket? Did Egyptian lore
Avail to keep faith true in hearts of old?
And would their passionate love shame ours more cold?
Enchanted, yet it breathes rose attar vows
And lotus lure of love. Beneath palm boughs,
By marble fountains, templed, sphinx-lined ways,
Were kisses treason or the pledge of days
Heavy with fate? Was love too maddened sweet
For one so frail? Was love too fevered fleet?
And did she wear this token to her grave,
Counting all naught to be his queen or slave?
And had she those fond fancies that defy
The grave, soul of his soul, content to die
Thinking sweet love immortal?

Long since then
The centuries have borne great tides of men;
Undying Greece has flamed and flared away;
Reverberant Rome has passed; yet to this day
This fragile bit of perishable gold,
With vows and kisses, prayers and tears enscrolled,
Fair as of old, wanders in distant lands,
Homeless, weary for those first soft hands.

THE PHILOSOPHER IN SOCIETY

By L. A. BROWNE

HOW can they say no man understands woman, when there are so many confirmed bachelors?

All pessimists are not married men—some men don't know when they are well off.

It is generally *your* charity that covers the *other fellow's* sins.

When you stretch the truth others can see through it.

The scales of Justice are too frequently over her eyes.

The busiest thing in the world is idle curiosity.

A hobble skirt is an awful habit to get into.

Many a swanlike neck is supporting a goose head.

Town criers were abolished when women's clubs were organized.

Two's company; three's the eternal triangle.



MR. SCRAPPINGTON—There would be fewer divorces if more men were like William G. Differdaffer.

MRS. SCRAPPINGTON—Why so?

MR. SCRAPPINGTON—He is a bachelor.



"WHY did you buy one of those old-fashioned 'pepper and salt' suits?"
"Well, it is bound to be good for at least two seasons."

AN AMATEUR HOBO

By ELLIOTT FLOWER

JOE was always getting me into trouble.

It all grew out of one of those foolish wagers men occasionally make. We had been discussing hoboes and other human derelicts. I maintained that, whatever rebuffs of fortune might be experienced, no one ever *remained* "down and out" if he really wanted to get up; that anybody, even the hobo, could, if he would, regain independence and the respect of men. Joe contended that it was a much more difficult and discouraging task than I imagined. It might be a man's own fault that he was down, but that did not affect the question at issue; being down—really *down*—he had almost no chance to redeem himself. Nobody wanted him; everybody was suspicious of him; the very fact that he was down was regarded as proof of incompetence or worse.

It is unnecessary to go into the details of the argument here. It became warm, superheated, in fact; and before I quite realized what I was doing I had undertaken to demonstrate the truth of my contention. I was to be a hobo with a suddenly awakened desire to gain a place in the world of men, and I was to rely upon my own unaided efforts to do it. I could neither seek nor accept any assistance, direct or indirect, from friends, nor accept charity of any kind. I was to be, theoretically, a friendless man with nothing but a new determination and a newly awakened pride for capital, and I must, within two months, work myself into a job of reasonable permanence and promise—something that might be fairly said to open the way to better things.

"I'll do it in one," I declared.

"You'll be starving within two days," retorted Joe.

"It is possible," I admitted, "that I may be a bit hungry, but I'll console myself by making up the party and the menu for the dinner you will have to provide when I win."

"Don't want to add a hat, do you?" snorted Joe.

"Sure," I agreed, "and anything else you wish and think you can afford to pay for."

Well, that wager was enough to make a man anxious when we finished adding to it.

II

I SHALL have to confess that my confidence was much shaken when I was made up for the part. Joe supervised the preparations, and he made an artistic job of it. I looked as if I had just stepped out of a hobo camp. Not only was my wardrobe of the most incongruous and disreputable character, but I had not been permitted to shave for a week, and for two days Joe had not even allowed me to comb my hair. He said I could do what I pleased to make myself more presentable when the theoretical awakening came, but so far as possible I must be the actual hobo at the beginning. I was. I sadly realized, as I surveyed the result in the glass, that I would not have given myself a job.

After an unusually hearty and early breakfast—I couldn't be sure how long that breakfast might have to last me—Joe took me to a distant part of the city in his automobile. "Remember," he cautioned, "you're a hobo! No explanations to anybody under any cir-

cumstances. It would be no trick at all to do your stunt if you explained the situation. Any disclosure of the real facts will be a confession of defeat."

He let me out at a deserted corner, and then, as I stood beside the machine for a moment, passed a hand that was liberally coated with oil and dirt quickly across my face. "That helps some," he laughed as he chugged away.

My plan was to provide for my immediate wants in any way that I could, and then tackle the main problem when I was somewhat better prepared for it. It was necessary therefore to begin with odd jobs, and I tried the most pretentious house in the neighborhood.

"Ain't got a thing for you!" exclaimed the woman who answered the ring, and she slammed the door in my face.

It was not an encouraging beginning, and something of the cowardice and hopelessness of the real hobo took possession of me. I felt that I was somehow in the wrong and might be arrested, so I waited until I was well out of sight of that house before I tried another.

Here I fared slightly better, that is, I was not rebuffed quite so promptly. The woman let me explain that I wanted work, not charity. But she did not believe me.

"Oh, yes, you want work!" she said scornfully. "You look it."

"Ma'am," I insisted, "I *do* want work, any kind of honest work."

"I suppose," she retorted, "that you wore your clothes to rags and picked up all that dirt looking for work!"

"No, ma'am," I confessed. "I only began looking for it this morning. I've been a tramp, but I don't intend to be one any longer."

"Reformed?" she queried.

"Yes."

She looked me over critically, and shook her head. "The last reformed tramp that came along here," she said, "stole two hammers, a saw, a chisel and a pie. I never could see why he wanted the tools. Anyhow, I don't take chances with tramps any more. Besides, I haven't got anything for you to do."

"I assure you—" I began.

"You don't talk like a tramp," she

interrupted, "and that looks bad. Like as not you're a burglar. You'd better move along."

However, after trying two more places with like result, I got a job cleaning up a yard, for which I received fifteen cents, a few scraps of cold meat and a piece of pie. The woman seemed to think she was overpaying me, but I have always believed that I was entitled to additional compensation for eating the pie. I finally got two more jobs at a quarter each, making my total receipts sixty-five cents. At the last place I tried a sympathetic little woman talked to me, and while she had no work to give me she was deeply interested in the story of my "reformation." It was a good story by this time; I had been revising and improving it all day.

"Come in," she explained impulsively when I had concluded. "You ought to be helped, and I'll get my husband to give you a job."

She called her husband into the hall, and my spirits rose. Here perhaps I was to get a real start the very first day of my adventure. But her husband was coldly skeptical.

"The real hobo never reforms," he declared. "He can't reform, however good his intentions may be. He has lost the trick of application, concentration; he is weak-willed, unreliable, vagrant."

"I'm not," I insisted.

"I'd expect you to last two days, perhaps three, possibly a whole week," he said, "and then slip back to your old life and habits."

"So you're trying to push me back the first thing," I retorted.

"On the contrary," he returned, "in spite of the fact that I have no confidence in hobo reform, I'll contribute fifty cents to help you along."

"I don't want it," I announced promptly. "It's charity, and I've set out to *earn* my living."

He looked at me in astonishment. "You're certainly a queer hobo," he commented. "Consider it a loan."

I hesitated. I had need of that half dollar, but such a loan might have the appearance of charity. Still, if I repaid

it out of my earnings it would be a perfectly regular and proper transaction.

"I don't know how much of a bluff this is," he went on dubiously, "but you rather interest me. If there was anything upon which to base a hope that you would make good, I'd be tempted to see what I could do for you."

I promptly accepted the half-dollar as a loan. It occurred to me that, as a purely business proposition, it was a wise thing to do. The repayment of the loan at a later date, when I was in shape to make a more favorable impression, might lead to the very opportunity that I desired. Still, the experience was depressing.

I was even more depressed when I reviewed the situation calmly that evening. I had assured myself of a bed in a municipal lodging house, and had enjoyed, so far as my rather critical palate would permit, a cheap but nourishing supper. I had received a total of \$1.15, of which only sixty-five cents had been earned; and any estimate for the future must be based upon my earning capacity.

I determined to try some other plan. House-to-house canvassing for odd jobs was hateful and humiliating. The man who applied for work was made to feel that he was an object of suspicion, an outcast, a disgraceful example of human depravity.

Then I thought of the country. Why not? The farmers were always complaining of the scarcity of labor at harvest time, and they should be ready to welcome anybody who was willing to work. As board and lodging went with the job, the cash wages could be kept intact until they were sufficient for my purpose. I didn't need much—just enough to enable me to discard my rags and put aside a few dollars for expenses. My spirits rose as I pictured the possibilities.

"Back to the farm!" I laughed. "The simple life for me!"

III

I WAS plodding along a dusty road when the automobile overtook me. I

stepped to the side of the road to let it pass, but to my surprise it did not pass. Instead, it was brought to a sudden stop, and a familiar feminine voice floated to me doubtfully, inquiringly.

"Jimmy?"

I looked up quickly, and having looked squarely into the eyes of the girl who was regarding me intently, I found it too late to deny my identity.

"Why, Jimmy," she exclaimed, "what *can* have happened?"

If I had been conscious of my very unprepossessing appearance before, I was doubly conscious of it now. I looked even worse than I had the day before. The dust and dirt of the road had settled all over me. I was still unshaven. And here I was, face to face with Ethel Dalrymple, and unable to explain.

"What *can* have happened, Jimmy?" she repeated.

"Better go on, Ethel," I advised glumly, "before anybody sees you talking to such a disreputable creature as I am."

The chauffeur, who had been eying me disapprovingly, reached for a lever, but she stopped him.

"I'll do nothing of the sort," she said to me. "You get right in here and tell me all about it."

I shook my head.

"Why not?" she demanded.

I spread out my arms to emphasize the contrast between us.

"You *are* a dreadful sight," she admitted. "But whatever may have happened, I'm sure there is no disgrace in it."

I thanked her, but I certainly did wish she would go on.

"So what *is* the matter?" she persisted.

"Nothing," I replied, "except that I am making a new start in life."

"Queer I hadn't heard anything about it!" she remarked.

"It was very unexpected," I explained.

"And your friends?" she asked.

"They don't know."

The lines of her mouth became firm and she nodded her head decidedly.

"I'll see that they do know," she declared.

"No, no!" I cried in an agony of apprehension. "Not a word to anyone!"

"Nonsense!" she returned impatiently. "You have lots of friends, Jimmy—good friends. They'll be glad to help you."

"I can't permit it," I insisted.

"There's Joe Coonley," she pursued calmly. "You haven't broken with Joe since I've been away, have you?"

I shook my head, although at that moment it would have given me great pleasure to have strangled Joe Coonley for luring me into the wager that was responsible for this unpleasant predicament.

"I'll see that word gets to Joe," she announced, "and I'll write to daddy myself, and—"

"No!" I interrupted emphatically.

"Why not?" she asked, and my mental perturbation increased. I had to give some plausible reason, and I could not give the true one.

"Ethel," I said, after a moment of hesitation, "I brought this disaster upon myself, and I must work out my own salvation. No one knows where I am or what I am doing," I went on. "As I am often away for considerable periods, my absence will occasion no surprise and create no comment. No one knows what has happened. I must win this fight alone—absolutely alone."

"I suppose," she reflected, "that that is very manly and noble, but it is also very foolish. You should let your friends help—"

"No," I said firmly.

"At least," she persisted, "let me take you on to the next house."

"No," I said again.

"Oh, very well," she agreed reluctantly. "It's your own affair, of course. It's all very silly of you, Jimmy," she added, "but—plucky. I rather like it. I hope you win." She nodded to the chauffeur to go ahead. "Good luck, Jimmy!" she called back.

Oh, it was a most unfortunate encounter. Why should she, of all people, cross my path at such a time? I had

supposed her to be still in Europe. If back, she should have been miles away, for Dalrymple's business affairs had recently necessitated his removal to New York. Indeed, I had planned to have business in New York whenever I might hear of her return. We had been chums, nothing more, but the possibility of being something more had occurred to me during her absence, and the thought of the unfavorable impression I must have created was disquieting.

I turned into the first crossroad, and ventured to make another application for work. I was again subjected to an unpleasantly critical scrutiny, although I could not see that I looked much worse than the farmer himself. I was more ragged, of course, but certainly no dirtier. The farmer, however, seemed to take a different view of it. "The women folks wouldn't let you inside the house," he declared frankly.

"I'll sleep in the barn," I offered.

He shook his head energetically. "Not much!" he said. "I got too much respect fer my hosses. Besides, there's more to steal in the barn than there is in the house."

"Dave Cooper might try you," he remarked finally. "Dave's got a big place with outside quarters fer extry hands, so he don't have to be partic'lar. You turn east at the next corner, an' you'll see Dave's house right atop the first hill."

I went on to Dave's, and Dave seemed disposed to give me a chance. He was unlike the other farmers I had seen. He was better dressed, better educated, and it was quite evident that he planned and superintended the work without doing much of it himself. He apparently lived better than his neighbors, too. The main house was unusually large and attractive, and there were two other buildings, one fairly large and the other a mere cottage, for the accommodation of those in his employ. He was, in fact, as I learned later, one of the scientific farmers—men who farm with their heads as well as their hands—that the agricultural colleges turn out, and he had prospered accordingly.

"Know anything about farming?" he asked.

"Not a thing," I answered, "but I am reasonably quick to learn, and I can work."

"Perhaps you can," he returned doubtfully, "but you don't look as if you had."

"I'm trying to make a new start," I explained.

"I'll help you out with some clothes, anyhow," he said.

"I can't accept them," I returned, "unless you'll give me a job and let me pay for them."

"Can't accept them!" he repeated in surprise. "Why not?"

"That troublesome old question! 'No charity!' I said firmly. "I made up my mind to that when I started out after work. I want a job of some kind—nothing else."

"I'll try you," he decided. "I don't really need another hand just now, but I guess I can keep you busy. Come over to the cottage."

He led the way, and I found the cottage to be a tiny two-room affair, of which I was to be the only occupant, for the present, at least. The others in his employ lived in the larger building, and to that, I learned, I was also to go for my meals. I wondered at this unusual arrangement, for so far as my observation went farmers generally did not put up the social barriers that seemed to exist here. However, it was a matter of no consequence to me.

He provided me with clothing that, although far from new, was a vast improvement upon what I was wearing, and even lent me a razor and a shaving cup and brush.

"You don't have to be shaved clean to work on a farm," he remarked with a smile, "but you'd better get some of those bristles off—enough so that you can tell when you've washed your face."

"How much for the clothes?" I asked.

"Put your own price on them," he replied. "I can't see that they're worth much of anything."

"But you *must* fix the price," I insisted.

"Two dollars," he ventured doubtfully.

"All right," I agreed. "Take it out of the first money that's coming to me."

"You don't know yet what you're going to get," he suggested.

"The important thing," I replied, "is that I get a job." He could not know, of course, how very true that was! "It's a start," I added, "and that's what I particularly want."

"I like the way you talk," was his approving comment, "and I'll try you on twenty-five dollars a month, which is more than an inexperienced man ought to get."

I realized, after the change was made, that I was still no sartorial Adonis, although I was certainly much more presentable than before. All in all, I felt that I looked like a very decent farmhand.

The next moment, however, I was suddenly conscious of the fact that there is a vast difference between a very decent farmhand and what society considers a gentleman. For Ethel Dalrymple, hatless and apparently quite at home here, was chatting with Cooper. A flush of either surprise or annoyance, or both, showed that she saw me, but she gave no other sign of recognition, and her gaze passed coldly by me. And then my mind was instantly busy with the awkward possibilities of the situation.

IV

COOPER decided that, for the present at least, he would give me "chores" to do. "Chores," I found, covered about everything but work in the field. They included all the odd jobs about the various farm buildings, and anyone who ever has worked on a farm knows how many of these there are.

I had the companionship of Cooper himself much of the time, and I was presently aware that my work, in spite of its trivial and changing character, was already laid out for me as carefully and completely as it would be in a factory. That was his system. He had a little room that he used as an office,

in which he kept his records and perfected his plans, and there never was a moment that he did not know just what had been done and just what each man was to do next. Yet, in spite of this perfection of system, into which he fitted me on such brief notice, he was democratic and affable, seemed to be rather interested in me, and was apparently as anxious to draw me out with regard to certain things as I was to draw him out with regard to certain other things.

"You've got me puzzled," he remarked at one time.

"How?" I asked.

"That idea of not letting anybody give you anything," he explained; "it beats me! Suppose you hadn't got work today?"

"I'd have slept in a strawstack," I replied.

"How about supper?" he persisted.

"I had a quarter," I said, "that I could have made cover supper and breakfast, and that would have given me another day to get work."

"And then?"

"I'd have to go hungry if I hadn't found work."

"But would you?" he persevered.

"Yes," I answered firmly; "I couldn't have done anything else."

"When did you have your last square meal?" he demanded abruptly.

That was a poser. I tried evasion. "Oh, I haven't really suffered yet," I replied. "I got some odd jobs yesterday."

"But before that?" he persisted.

"Before that," I explained, "I did not feel as I do now about many things." I certainly did not. "I managed to get along fairly well." I certainly did. "I could do as well now if I were willing to abandon the principle at stake." I certainly could, but I hoped he would not pursue the subject further. And he did not.

"You're a queer hobo," he commented after a pause.

"Well," I returned, gaining confidence, "you seem to be unlike any other farmer I have seen."

"I'm a business farmer," he replied, and I saw at once that I had touched on

his hobby. "I run my farm very much as the manufacturer runs his shop. I have a system of accounting that is quite as perfect for my purpose. It's a big thing in any business to know exactly where the profit lies. That's the only way to run any business," he finished. "I have even tried it at the house with success. We take summer boarders, you know."

That would explain the segregation of the farmhands and the presence of Ethel Dalrymple.

"Is the young lady I saw talking with you one of the boarders?" I inquired indifferently.

"Miss Dalrymple?" he returned. "Oh, yes, she's here with her aunt, Mrs. Walling, for a week or so—waiting for her mother to get settled in New York, I believe. Mrs. Walling spends a part of every summer here."

I breathed a sigh of relief. The presence of Mrs. Dalrymple, who knew me, would have meant further and more distressing complications, but, fortunately, I never had met Mrs. Walling. If Ethel held her tongue, as I believed she would, there was nothing to fear from the aunt.

The experiences of the following day left me still more puzzled and perturbed. Cooper kept me at work in the vicinity of the house, and I saw Ethel a score of times. She also saw me—she could not have helped it—but there was never even a glimmer of recognition. This was to be expected when others were present, but there were several occasions when she could have given me a smile of encouragement or even have spoken to me without anyone being the wiser. But she let these opportunities pass. Then, when I least expected it, she spoke—disconcertingly.

I had been sent to cut the grass on the lawn in front of the big house, and she was on the porch with several other girls and women. I kept my eyes on my work, but I soon discovered that I had become an object of interest. They were discussing me very much as if I were a gatepost of some odd design. At last Ethel addressed me directly.

"You were a tramp, weren't you?"

she asked. "Mr. Cooper said you were."

"Yes, I was," I admitted.

"You look as if you might be capable of something better than this," she remarked. "Can you read and write?" She was actually making sport of me.

"I have had a college education," I said curtly.

"Was it drink that made a tramp of you?" she asked abruptly.

"No!" I almost shouted.

"And you think, after your tramp life," she pursued calmly, "that you can make an industrious and trustworthy man of yourself?"

"Of course," I asserted.

"Well, we all wish you luck," she said, by way of dismissal.

As I turned away the little party broke into excited conversation, and I gathered that they were all amazed at Ethel's courage in talking so plainly to me. I was a dangerous character, it seemed. It was a wonder I had not hit Ethel over the head with the lawnmower. But at least it showed that Ethel had told them nothing of my story.

V

COOPER sent for me early the next morning. He was apparently much perplexed about something.

"Know anything about autos?" he asked.

"Quite a bit," I replied.

"You do!" he exclaimed. "I thought you were a tramp."

"I was," I retorted, "but that proves nothing. Skilled labor and even the professions are represented among the hoboes."

"I suppose that's true," he conceded, "but it beats me."

"Nothing surprising about it," I argued. "Even an ex-preacher is occasionally found in a hobo camp. Why not a chauffeur?"

"Oh, it's not so much that," he explained. "What beats me is that they should have been so sure of it."

"Who?" I asked.

"Mrs. Walling and Miss Dalrymple. They've got a job for you."

"Don't want it!" I returned quickly.

"Don't want it!" he repeated, evidently disgusted as well as bewildered. "What's the matter with you, anyway?"

And I couldn't explain. I was perfectly willing to tell any sort of a plausible lie, but I could think of none.

"Their chauffeur's leaving unexpectedly," he went on, "and they need somebody to run their car. I don't know how they happened to pick you out, but Miss Dalrymple was sure you were just the man. It's Mrs. Walling's car, of course, and she wasn't so sure, but she finally let Miss Dalrymple convince her. Better job and more money," he urged. "Any objection to automobile work?" he demanded as I remained silent.

"None whatever," I replied.

"Then what in thunder—"

"I'm working for you," I interrupted desperately, "and I don't want to change jobs before I've fairly started."

As an explanation, it was weak. "You're a fool!" he exclaimed.

I was—but not for the reason he supposed; my foolishness antedated that by several days.

"All right," he said at last, "you're working for me. Now I tell you to take out Mrs. Walling's car."

"Very well," I agreed.

"You'll do it?" he queried.

"Of course."

"And I also tell you," he said, "to take Mrs. Walling out in the car."

"Certainly," I acquiesced.

"Likewise Miss Dalrymple," he added, eyeing me expectantly.

I nodded.

"You'll do it?" he asked.

"Of course."

"Well, hang it all, do it then!" he cried, now thoroughly exasperated. "You'll find a chauffeur's coat, cap and goggles in the garage, but," he added sarcastically, "perhaps there's some reason why you can't wear them."

"I don't know of any," I returned after a moment of reflection.

"You don't?"

"None whatever. I see no reason why you shouldn't provide special equipment for special service."

"I wish," he grumbled, "I could get your point of view. I'd like to box it up and ship it to an alienist for analysis."

I had the garage to myself, for Mrs. Walling was the only one of the present guests who had brought a car, and I went at my task with care and caution. I am no professional chauffeur, and I wished to be sure that I understood this particular car and that it was in proper condition for such service as might be required of it. The car itself was the least of my problems. I had become a chauffeur in a most bewildering way. I had held closely to the conditions imposed, and still I was a chauffeur for Ethel Dalrymple, for of course Mrs. Walling was a mere figurehead so far as my employment was concerned. I was on Cooper's payroll but working for Ethel, and Ethel herself, after practically flouting me, had brought this about. It was quite incomprehensible.

Nor did the ride that followed throw any light upon the situation. I was apparently on probation so far as Mrs. Walling was concerned, and still something of a joke so far as Ethel was concerned. Mrs. Walling needed some assurance of my trustworthiness, and Ethel seemed to find entertainment in the awkwardness of my position, for Mrs. Walling did not let my presence interfere with any comments she desired to make.

"Why, really," she exclaimed, "he looks quite respectable in the automobile togs. One never would suspect that so much could be done with a tramp in so short a time."

Presently Mrs. Walling discovered that I was also a careful man, and she expressed considerable surprise. "I was quite sure he would be too reckless to be safe," she said.

"There was danger of it, of course," admitted Ethel.

"I can't see what ever made you think he could run an automobile," added Mrs. Walling.

"He looked as if he could," returned Ethel.

"He didn't look that way to me," declared Mrs. Walling.

The situation was almost unbearable.

Perhaps the well trained servant, be he butler, coachman or chauffeur, learns to listen without emotion to discussions of himself, but I could not.

"Do you know," said Mrs. Walling, returning to me after a brief consideration of other topics, "I believe he'd look well in livery."

"Yes," agreed Ethel, "I think he would." And I was sure she laughed.

That ride covered the most uncomfortable two hours that I ever experienced. Ethel never deliberately made me the subject of conversation, but she certainly did not discourage Mrs. Walling, and I seemed to have some sort of a fascination for that lady. I determined that I would throw up my job with Cooper rather than act as chauffeur for these two again. But I changed my mind at the last moment.

"Are you satisfied, Mrs. Walling?" Ethel asked, as they were alighting after our return.

"Ye-es," returned Mrs. Walling doubtfully. "He isn't at all reckless, as I thought he'd be, and he acts as if he'd been properly trained somewhere. I guess he's safe enough."

"Then may I have him and the machine for an hour or so this afternoon?"

Mrs. Walling hesitated; then she drew Ethel a little to one side and whispered to her. Ethel nodded. "I'll look out for that," she said.

"You can't be too careful," cautioned Mrs. Walling. "You can't tell what a tramp will do if he happens to get where there is anything to drink. I wouldn't go to the village at all, if I were you."

I turned to Ethel with some bitterness as soon as we were out of sight of the house that afternoon, but she was too quick for me, and I was in part disarmed before I had a chance to begin.

"Wait, Jimmy," she cautioned with a most engaging smile, quite as if there had been nothing to disturb our old friendly relations. "When we're a little further away I'll sit in front with you, and then we can talk more comfortably."

A few minutes later, being then well away from the house, I stopped the

machine and helped her change from the tonneau to the seat beside me. Then I started on again slowly.

"Jimmy," she began before I was ready to launch my first question, "why won't you let me help you?"

"What do you mean?" I parried.

"Oh, don't pretend innocence," she returned. "Mr. Cooper told me about your extraordinary behavior. He can't understand it, and neither can I. Why are you willing to work for him for less money than we offered for identically the same work? Is it pride? Are you ashamed to work for someone who has known you in better times?"

It was a difficult question, and I was slow in answering it. "No, not ashamed," I replied at last, "but I don't want anybody's sympathy."

"How silly you are!" she exclaimed. "This wasn't an offer of sympathy but of work, good, honest work. It wasn't nice to me, Jimmy; you don't know how I had to scheme to arrange it. I thought it would give you a start, a chance to get something better. Why, Jimmy, I had to get a vacation for Mrs. Walling's regular chauffeur in order to do this for you."

"For me!" I retorted bitterly. "For your own diversion, you mean. It's been a great joke for you; but you've made me feel like a fool."

"Oh, that isn't fair, Jimmy," she objected. "I couldn't recognize you, could I?"

"No," I admitted reluctantly.

"I couldn't do that without betraying your identity, and for the same reason I couldn't explain to Mrs. Walling how I knew you would be an acceptable chauffeur," she went on. "I had to make you convince her of that, and you were very ungracious about it, too, Jimmy. I kept you at the porch last night for that reason only; I tried to draw you out to reassure Mrs. Walling."

"You made a joke of me," I contended, still resentful, "and you've been laughing at me all day."

"Not at you, Jimmy," she insisted, "but at some of the queer complications. The situation has been farcical, you know; I couldn't help seeing that

and taking a little advantage of it. But I'm proud of you, Jimmy. I think you are very foolish in going to such extremes, but I like the spirit. There's something noble in being so dreadfully independent."

I was proud of myself for a moment—until I recalled that I was not inspired by the motives she imagined.

"So I'm going to help you anyhow," she concluded. "I have already written to daddy."

"What!" I cried.

"I couldn't see you doing this sort of thing," she explained, "however splendid your motive. I told him all I knew, and of course he'll find out the rest." He would certainly make some odd discoveries if he looked into the matter at all. "Anyhow," she concluded, "he'll see that you have a real chance to make a fresh start." I was turning the automobile now. "Where are you going?" she asked.

"Back," I answered bitterly. "You've driven me from the first job I got."

Her eyes opened wide in amazement. "Is it as bad as that?" she inquired.

"Worse," was my gloomy rejoinder.

"Are you *afraid* of being found?"

"Oh, here, hold on!" I cried, aghast. "No, no, no, that's not the idea at all! I haven't done anything wrong, but I don't want help, I tell you. I'm doing this stunt—"

"Stunt?" she interrupted in surprise. "That sounds like a vaudeville act."

It had become one, but I could not tell her so. "I'm making a record for myself—alone," I corrected, "so I've got to move on if you've written—"

"Yes," she put in, "I've written it all to daddy; but," she added, "I haven't mailed the letter yet."

"Then don't mail it!" I said.

"Why not?"

"I've already told you," I replied desperately.

"You've told me nothing," she retorted. "You've made the most amazing and puzzling requests of me, acted in a most amazing and puzzling way, and you haven't given me any real explanation. How did you lose your

money, Jimmy? I always thought you were rich."

"Not rich," I returned, trying to evade the direct question, "but financially comfortable."

"And what happened?" she persisted. "Why can't you trust an old friend, Jimmy?"

"Ethel," I promised, "I'll tell you the whole story when I've won."

"Won what?" she asked.

"Won my way back to my old place in the world," I finally managed to explain.

"That's a long time to wait," she objected.

"It may not be so long," I assured her.

She looked at me with a troubled smile. "I like your spirit, Jimmy," she said, "but I'm afraid you're too sanguine, especially in view of your refusal of the help of friends. Still, there's one thing I can do for you."

"What's that?" I demanded anxiously.

"I can speak to Mr. Cooper," she replied. "I'm sure he could put you in the way of much better things if he only knew something about you—your ability and other qualifications."

"I'll leave if you do," I threatened.

"Oh, I won't tell him who you are—just something about you," she explained.

The fact that she was so deeply interested was most pleasing to me, but—well, I simply had to get matters on some better basis. I told her that I had the utmost confidence in her, that she should be the first person to whom I told my story, but that there were reasons why I did not wish to tell it just yet, and I asked her to trust me and let matters rest as they were until I was ready to explain.

"Why, of course I'll trust you, Jimmy," she replied, "and I'll do just as you say, but I think it's foolish to be so very sensitive and secretive about your reverses."

"Oh, I'm foolish, all right," I returned glumly, "and you will know all about it later."

With that, we dropped the subject,

and for the following week there was nothing to disturb the serenity of existence under the new conditions. Ethel asked no troublesome questions and made no troublesome efforts to help me; Mrs. Walling expressed entire approval of me as a chauffeur; Cooper seemed uncertain what to make of me. Ethel exercised much ingenuity in devising excuses for using the automobile herself, and we had several long rides together. We never reverted to the discussion of my affairs, but we talked of everything else in which either of us had any interest, and the fact that she always left in the tonneau, sat with me during the greater part of the ride, and returned to the tonneau just before we reached home, gave a touch of clandestine adventure to the outings that was rather alluring. Ethel was a charming girl, anyhow; I had always known that, but the fact was assuming new significance.

It assumed even greater significance when she unexpectedly announced, during one of our rides, that she was to leave the next day.

"But I thought you were to be here all summer!" I exclaimed.

"We intended to stay longer," she said, "but Mrs. Walling has been invited to join the Barlows at Bar Harbor for the rest of the summer."

"And you?" I asked.

"Oh, I shall be in this vicinity a little longer," she replied. "I'm going to the Cutlers' first."

I breathed easier. I had feared she would join her father and mother in New York at once, but a visit with the Cutlers would keep her within reach. That would not help me much in the present circumstances, but there was some satisfaction in mere proximity.

"May I write to you, Ethel?" I asked.

"Why not come to me, Jimmy, when you are ready?" she suggested.

"Ready?" I repeated.

"You're going to tell me the whole story, you know," she reminded me. "Isn't it important enough to tell in person? I should imagine it was, from the mystery with which you have surrounded it."

"It is," I declared emphatically.

"And you'll surely tell me, Jimmy? I'm dreadfully curious, you know."

"I'll surely tell you, Ethel," I promised. That was all I intended to say, but something impelled me to go on. "And I'll tell you more than the story," I added.

"Yes?" she queried.

I held the wheel with one hand and reached for one of her hands with the other. "I'll tell you how much I love you," I said.

She was silent for a moment, but made no attempt to withdraw her hand.

"Why wait, Jimmy?" she asked at last.

"Why—why—Ethel," I floundered, "I can't very well—"

"Oh!" Her face flushed and her hand was instantly withdrawn.

"But I do love you!" I cried passionately. "I want you to marry me. I've been dreaming of that possibility, living on that hope!" Love making for the chauffeur of a moving automobile is no easy task, but I felt that I must convince her now, and I continued and increased the fervor of my protestations. "I didn't mean to say this just yet, Ethel," I concluded, "but I couldn't help it. You believe me, don't you?" For she was merely looking at me in a strange, questioning way.

"Oh, yes," she replied, as if suddenly awakened by my last question, and again she let her hand rest in mine. "I believe you now, Jimmy, but—"

"Well?"

"Do you think it very complimentary to tell me that you must have money before you can say that you love me?"

"Well, I did say it, anyway!" I urged in desperation.

"Yes, you did say it," she admitted, "but it's all so bewildering—the way you said it and—and everything."

"And you care—a little?" I knew she did—that is, I would have known she did if I had been a reasoning mortal at the moment, and it was clear to me later.

"Oh, you know I've always liked you, Jimmy," she answered.

"And you'll marry me?" I did not stop to decide then whether this was

allowable or to consider the complications that might ensue if I became the fiancé of Ethel Dalrymple while still under pledge to accept no favors from former friends. But she let me escape this entanglement.

"Not while you're so silly, Jimmy," she said.

"I'm not so silly as you think," I expostulated; "at least, not in the way you think. There are reasons—"

"Besides," she went on, "I thought you were going to wait."

"I am," I groaned. "I must."

"Very well, Jimmy," she decided, "I'll give you my answer when you tell me your story."

VI

I DID not stay my month out with Cooper. I never had intended to. My purpose was merely to get enough money to give me a better chance at something else, and Cooper helped me in this by paying me extra for the clerical work I did for him in my spare time.

Nor did he express any surprise when I announced my intention of leaving. "I didn't think you would last long here," he said. "It's only the halfway place for you, from which you must either advance or drop back. Which is it going to be?"

"Advance," I replied. "I'm going after something in which there is more promise for me."

"Quite right," he commended. "You're not far enough away from the lure of the old life here to be safe. I don't call a tramp safe in a farm job until he has worked a year. Is there anything I can do for you?"

"Yes," I said; "you can write me a letter of recommendation."

His brow clouded. "What do you think I am justified in saying?" he asked.

"The exact truth," I replied. "Tell all that you know of me."

"I'll fix you up," he agreed; "but," he added, shaking his head, "you certainly have got me puzzled. I can't make you out at all."

However, I left him a little later with the documentary evidence of my first important step toward rehabilitation in my pocket, and it was specific and convincing. I returned at once to the city, and the first thing I did there was to invest in some clothing, cheap, it is true, but neat and serviceable. Cheap as it was, it took all but two dollars of my money, but I considered it the best possible investment.

I then went to see Mr. Sidney Mears. Mr. Mears was assistant manager of a large wholesale house, but he was also the man who had lent me a half-dollar at the beginning of my experience as a hobo. Mr. Mears was not an easy man to reach, however, and I was requested to send in my card.

"Please say to Mr. Mears," I returned, "that he would not recognize my name, but that I am indebted to him for a small sum of money and have come to pay it to him personally."

That message was odd enough to arouse his curiosity, and I was shown into his office. He did not recognize me, of course.

"Well?" he queried sharply, after a quick, searching glance.

"I'm the tramp," I explained.

"You're the what?" he demanded.

"The tramp," I repeated.

"What tramp?" he queried sharply.

"The tramp that borrowed fifty cents from you a short time ago," I replied. I explained, reminding him of my call, of his wife's interest in my story, of his skepticism, of his offer of a half-dollar, and of my refusal to take it except as a loan. "And I have come to pay it back," I added, laying the coin on his desk.

He picked up the coin doubtfully, as if he suspected some trick, looked at it in a bewildered way, and then looked at me.

"You're that tramp?" he said finally.

"I am."

"And you've come to pay me back?"

"Yes."

"Is that all?"

"No," I admitted frankly; "I am quite as much interested in proving to you that I meant it when I said that I had quit the road."

"Why?"

"Because you said you'd be willing to help me if there was anything upon which to base a hope that I'd make good, and I want a job."

He was silent a moment, his eyes fixed on my face. "I remember you now," he said at last, "but there's been a big change. What have you been doing? How did you get started?"

I spread out Cooper's letter on the desk in front of him, and he read it through carefully.

"What kind of a job do you want?" he asked abruptly.

"The best that you can give me," I answered.

"Cooper seems to think you are capable of clerical work, but I don't know that a farmer is a very good judge of that."

"Try me," I urged.

He read the letter over again, then looked at me and smiled. "Well," he said, "you've certainly made an astonishing transformation in a short time. You are entitled to a chance, and I'll give it to you." He touched a bell, and his secretary appeared. "Tell Mr. Bixby," he said, "to find out what this man can do and then make a place for him. I don't care what it is; just find work for him somewhere in the office."

I had won! There was no doubt of that in my own mind now. I had only to make good in that establishment to have such a position of "reasonable permanence and promise" that would meet the requirements. Such a place could be fairly said to "open the way to better things," and it would be necessary to hold it only so long as might be necessary to demonstrate that I could hold it. Assuredly I had won.

I held my position only two weeks, believing that long enough, but I took the precaution to write to Joe Coonley before giving it up. I told him I had won, inclosed Cooper's letter as part proof, and suggested that he go to Sidney Mears for the rest of the proof. Mr. Mears's assertion that I was a regular and reasonably satisfactory member of his office force would settle the matter, of course.

Then, for the first time since I had left as a hobo, I returned to my old quarters, attired myself suitably for the purpose, and went to call on Ethel Dalrymple at the Cutlers'. At last I could claim her without fear of complications, and I was jubilant. At last I could tell her the whole story of my exploit, and it seemed to me amusing and distinctly creditable. I derived much satisfaction in the contemplation of her surprise and pride in my achievement. It was a good thing I got my pleasure in advance.

Ethel was glad to see me, but she seemed to find something puzzling and not altogether satisfactory in my sudden restoration to apparent affluence.

"Why, Jimmy," she said, troubled, "you look just as prosperous as you ever were."

"I am," I replied.

"How did you do it?" she asked.

"Oh, that's a long story," I returned impatiently, for there was another matter I wished disposed of first. "The main thing is that I did. So I can claim you now."

I sought to do it, but she eluded me. "You're taking a good deal for granted," she objected, smiling. "I never said—"

"But you as much as said—" I began, interrupting her.

"But what I really did say," she interrupted in her turn, "was that I'd give you my answer when you told me your story."

Now that I was free to do as I pleased, it seemed a waste of precious time to begin with the story, but, of course, I could put the main facts in few words and give the details later, and this seemed the quickest way to settle the more important matter.

"I never lost my money," I said. "It was a bet with Joe Coonley that I could start as a tramp and work up."

"A bet!" she cried.

"And I did it!" I added proudly.

"A bet!" she repeated, disappointment echoing in her tone. "And I was so sorry for you!"

"But never mind that now," I urged. "It was—"

"A bet!" she said again, reproach

in eyes and voice. "And I thought you so noble!"

"Well, I showed what I could do!" I expostulated.

"A bet!" And now her eyes began to flash. "You deceived me—accepted my sympathy—played the hero—made a joke of me—laughed at me—"

"No, no, never that, Ethel!" I protested.

"You did; you know you did, and I hate you!" she cried. "I never want to see you again."

"But, Ethel—" I pleaded.

"It was all false and base," she went on passionately. "You haven't any heart. You couldn't have treated me so if you had. And you didn't trust me."

Then her anger gave way to tears. I tried to console her, but she pushed me away. I tried to explain, but she would not listen. I pleaded, promised, beseeched, but she only sobbed for me to go away. I had disappointed her; I had humiliated her. She had thought me noble, and I was merely a conscienceless humorist.

I insisted upon telling my story, anyway, sitting as near to her as she would let, and I presently discovered that she was listening. I went over it in detail, explaining why it was impossible to take her into my confidence and how unhappy this made me, and I made one last appeal.

"You won't condemn me for that, will you, Ethel?" I pleaded. "Haven't I already been punished for whatever sins I may have committed? Think how miserable you made me while I was trying to keep up that masquerade!"

"Did I?" she asked, looking up at last.

"Indeed you did, Ethel," I declared fervently.

"Oh, well, Jimmy," she said, now smiling again, "I guess you didn't mean to treat me so shamefully."

"Then you forgive me?" I queried, my heart dancing with elation.

"Ye-es, I forgive you."

"And you won't hold it against me?"

"No, Jimmy."

"And you will—"

"Yes, Jimmy," she sighed. "I'll let

you begin all over again, without prejudice."

I am sure my heart missed a beat then. "What!" I cried.

"It's false pretenses," she explained. "That nullifies everything, doesn't it? But you may begin all over again, with-

out prejudice. We'll forget the last few weeks."

I began again, and I imagine that is the only case of a girl being won twice by the same man. Ethel tells me now she is sorry she could not make it three times.



VANITY FAIR

By EUGENE C. DOLSON

"OH, have you been to Vanity Fair?
And what, Maid Marian, saw you there?"

"I was there, indeed, for many a day;
But now, at last, I have come away."

"And is it true, as the gossips tell,
At Vanity Fair they buy and sell?"

"It is true that pleasures are bought and sold
At Vanity Fair for price in gold;
And wealth may purchase honor and fame,
And youth and beauty a titled name."

"You were there, Maid Marian, long, you say;
Did you buy of these ere you came away?"

"Ah, no; it was not for these I sought;
But something better I would have bought,
A dearer treasure than all things there—
I found not love at Vanity Fair."



GOSSIP shows that we are considered still worth being talked about.



THE airship has come to stay—but not in the air.

A DEFENSE OF THE OCCASIONAL BACHELOR

By THOMAS PERCIVAL BEYER

THE bachelor in the days of chivalry was a candidate for the degree of knighthood, or master in the order. The implication of its present use is, consciously or unconsciously, that when a bachelor graduates into marriage he becomes master of the family and household. Oh, Jupiter, what absurdities etymology reveals! Oh, Pluto, what sublime presumption!

This long-eared presumption is equaled only by the domesticated complacency with which the quondam bachelor on his new throne, while the *Power Behind* is fixing its hair finally for the theater, assures his erstwhile comrade that as a bachelor he is only a half-man, that he is a selfish egotist, the bacillus of race suicide, a menace to society. But the wise Old Boy knows the tones. He remembers his boyhood when the "gang" went for the first swim of the season, and he catches the echo of the agonized seduction in the invitation of the first fellow to take the plunge, "Come on in; the water's warm as milk."

Anathema descends upon the bachelor from others besides the new Benedick. What the spinsters think must, of course, never be known and shall certainly "not be told, for me," but now the legislature of a great commonwealth in our Union declares the bachelor a pernicious luxury and decrees that he espouse the state. Since he cannot afford a wife and will never burden the state by swelling the numbers in her prisons, asylums and workhouses, he is to be taxed for the support of Benedick's wife. (The logic herein is justified by some who wish to return to polyandrous soci-

ety and see the first step in this tax.) The unattached male! He is the outlaw of society; guilty from the foundations of the world until he seeks the city of refuge; legitimate prey for every trapezing corsair. Leap year is only a period of tetanus in his strenuous life of continual dashes for escape. Take him dead or alive!

Now as an unprejudiced mugwump, or matrimonial amphibian, for I am about to plunge from my solid pier of bachelorhood, I desire to obtrude a word in defense of the Occasional Bachelor.

The first argument we may learn from the *Powers Behind*. They have never called into question the value of the Occasional, even the Frequent, Spinster. Every woman must steer between her Scylla and Charybdis. She must have what other women have; i.e., she must be *in style*; but no less is the imperative to have what *some* women do not. *Style* possesses no distinction where there are no dowds, and wives must have small comfort in a world where no perennial maids cast envious eyes. Said a little girl to her aunt, one whom

—nor chariot, nor barouche
Nor bandit cavalcade

had torn from her anxious father's arms: "Auntie, what would you do if you had your life to live over?" A moment's pause while sun and shade chased each other in her eyes, and then the sun broke out on her lips: "I should get married, my dear, before I got enough sense to know better." Wisdom of Socrates in the mouth of Xanthippe! She was your true matrimonial amphibian,

an honorable class in which I claim membership.

So I opine that the Occasional Bachelor is essential to the comfort of the majority. (The majority, observe; not plurality. The bachelor, though single, enjoys, some say, plurality.) They envy him, but being the majority, unite in befooling him into reciprocal envy and enjoy the irony of his anxious and gratuitous concern for the unattained fruit that so many of them have found to be—a lemon.

Where would be the fun in kissing one's wife and calling her "My Own" or "Darling" in public, or in boasting of one's home and one's baby, if the suffering visitor had a wife and a home and a baby? Society endures the insufferable egotism and conceit of the newly wed because it considers that they have earned or must still earn some fun at the expense of the people whom a merciful Providence has spared. The law of compensation must be fulfilled. I impugn, therefore, the logic of this persecution. Night implies darkness; dupe implies quack; *this side* implies the *other side*. The bachelor is essential.

Among the wealth of material, I choose but one other plea. Let him be a *horrible example*. Who would wish to go to Heaven did no one go to Hell? The bachelor is the incarnation of selfishness. No one, not even the pretty young girl, is so blatantly selfish, unless it be the married brother whose egotism joined with that of his wife, envelops them both in double-casing. They assure each other mutually, however, that they are more unselfish than in former days and so remain blind to their extended but double-barred ego-centricity. Nothing so refined is the bachelor's selfishness. It is frank, gross, revolting—and so, medicinal.

I cannot withhold one other consideration which may appeal to the pragmatic among my readers. It is this: Why busy ourselves about the eradication of an evil that Nature herself has arrayed against? The race of bachelors must soon die out, for those worthies leave no descendants. On reflection, however, this fact seems so fundamental and its argument so incontrovertible that I leave it with no further comment.



TAKEN IN

By CLAUDE M. CARBERRY

I BEGGED her to open her heart,
And take in Love and me;
For she was sweet, divine, petite,
And gowned so charmingly.

But now, alas, in later years!
I find, to my chagrin,
That Love and I have cause to sigh—
We both *were taken in*.

THE SAME OLD STORY

By JEAN K. BAIRD

"YOU have kept me waiting just forty minutes," he said as he rose at her entrance. "Now, forty-five minutes—" He looked at his watch dubiously and shook his head.

"When a man calls at inopportune hours, he must wait until his hostess is ready to receive him, especially—"

"If the hostess is playing kitchen maid."

"Which she was not. On the contrary, she was enveloped in study—"

"Is it anything like a kimono?"

"A what? I don't understand."

"A study. I've seen women enveloped in opera cloaks and kimonos, but never in a study."

She gave him a disdainful look. "I was hoping that you might have improved."

"Hoping? Then you were really thinking of me during these three long years?"

"I do not know aught of the three years. I do not believe I thought of you in all that time. As I think of it now, I wonder that my thoughts did not go back to you some time. It may be for the same reason that we forget trouble. Who knows whither the clouds have fled?"

"I'm not a cloud. You talk the rankest nonsense, Sara Virginia; I am really ashamed that you are as illogical as ever. One expects more of a woman of—let me see, how old did you use to tell me you were?"

"I cannot remember. I lie so much about my age that I'm really uncertain. But if you want the real facts, just make it ten years less than your own."

They had shaken hands upon meeting and had forgotten to discontinue it.

He stood with his eyes on a level with hers, holding her hand tightly within his own.

There was no suggestion of humor in the voice or expression of either. So far as appearance went, each was as serious as though discussing a political issue.

"Who brought up the question of age, anyhow?" he continued. "Whoever did so showed lack of judgment. It is not tactful to mention age when the woman present has three gray hairs on her temples."

"Or when the man's head shows a wide expanse of cleared space."

"We are going to drop that subject right here. I want you to rectify a little misstatement. You declared that you had not thought of me in three years, and yet but a minute before you declared that you hoped that I might have been improved. Does not hoping imply thinking?"

"But it makes no specification of time. When the maid brought your card, your name gave birth to the hope. It was a short-lived hope."

"It lived forty-five minutes—I timed you, you know. It was just so long until you appeared."

"You missed your reckoning in that the maid took up several minutes in finding me."

"Come, let us sit here." He moved toward the old mahogany davenport at the end of the room. "I wish to know what you have been doing these three years."

She looked at him seriously for a few minutes, as though she would read deeper than his words. His eyes were clear enough and met her gaze squarely

enough to have her believe him sincere. But she had known him too long and too well to be influenced by the steady, serious gaze.

"Do you really care to know, or are you merely making conversation?"

"I wish to know. I wish you would tell me all—each year, each month, each day—every thought, every emotion."

"Do you make a practice of such a request of all the women you meet?"

"You are not *all* women."

"And you have not answered my question."

"Nor have you complied with my request concerning how you have spent your time these three years."

"Three years—has it really been so long? I thought it only a year."

"It has been three, but it seemed like fifteen. Well, proceed."

She drew a deep breath, looked at him seriously and said: "Every thought, every emotion for every day and every hour for three years has always been on the same theme—you."

He leaned back and laughed aloud.

"That is the first time I have ever been called a 'theme.' I have been called a 'subject.' Fortune tellers and mediums say I am a *good* subject."

"A medical student would declare you were not a good subject. You could not bear dissection."

"Morally or—" He looked at her as though expecting her to finish, but her eyes were fixed demurely upon her hands, as though in deep study.

"Every thought has been of me—who, then, wrote those one or two novels that have taken society by the ears?"

"You speak of society as though it were a pig. Ears, indeed!"

"I crave your pardon. It was the desire to be conventional which caused me to err. Custom has made the terms 'society body' acceptable. My native refinement moved me to use the auricular appendage in place of another."

"But what matters to you or me whether society is a pig or not? We have greater things to think of. About the books and magazine stories—who wrote them?"

"I am guilty, Your Honor."

"All the while you were thinking of me. There is a discrepancy between your statements and the result."

"Not at all. You do not fully grasp the situation. I thought of you. Had you been here I would have expressed myself orally."

"You always have."

"But you were not here. I gave voice to my emotions in art."

"And, incidentally, made it pay."

"I try not to think of that. I try to believe that I have a soul above dollars and cents. To have put a money value on my work would be like putting a money value on love."

"I am to believe, then, that you indignantly spurned the publisher's filthy cheque?"

"No, for although one may have a soul above dollars and cents, one has a body to be clothed; and tailored gowns are not had for the asking. Then, too, the cheques were not filthy. On the contrary, they were on a clean yellow paper. They did not seem like money at all. There is really something rather sordid about coppers and dimes, but a cheque is different, somehow."

His eyes had been resting upon her, taking in every detail of her face and dress. She was conscious of the scrutiny, but sat quiet until she thought there had been quite enough of it. Then she turned suddenly with the query, "Well?" Her tone and manner implied: "What do you think of me?"

"You certainly do look fine—ten times better-looking than you were three years ago and five years younger. Your mathematics have gone astray. You should be getting older. Instead, you have been going the other way. If I stay away three years again, I shall find you in short dresses and your hair in a braid."

"Why say 'three years'? Why not add, 'While the bathing season lasts'?"

"You do look good," he repeated softly, while his eyes rested upon her. Was his expression that of deep affection hidden by a remarkable self-control, or the merest indifference masquer-

ading itself as the divine passion? The woman knew.

"Sara Virginia, you are good to look at," he repeated.

"Please don't." There was a hurt tone in her voice. "Don't be so personal; I do not like it."

"Yes, you do," he laughed. "You like me to think you are good to look at, and more than that, you like me to say it. You look charming, dear," he finished very softly.

She turned her head and critically examined her attire. Then she said: "Do you call this charming? You should see me in a Parisian evening gown. I am the grandest thing you ever saw. You would not believe that anyone could look as beautiful as I do in that imported gown."

"I am not in a hurry. I can wait until you put it on."

"No, I will not do that. It is rather a trying ordeal for me. I live up to my gown."

"Wear a shirtwaist suit always, then, Sara Virginia. I like the homey, comfy—"

He paused suddenly. How could he be quite sure? Was she perfectly heartless—a woman of intellect and ambition, but no heart? Perhaps it would be too much to expect. The Fates are not generally so lavish. However, he would give her the benefit of a doubt. Perhaps her wit was the armor which nature had provided her, whereby she might protect a too sensitive, too tender personality beneath.

"If I sit here a half-hour longer I shall be just where I was three years ago," he said abruptly.

"Where were you—London or New York?"

"I was not speaking geographically, but emotionally, Sara Virginia."

"Where were you? I feel that it is expected of me to ask the question, and ask it I shall, though I die. Where were you?"

"I was in a state of delirium. I feel it creeping upon me. A half-hour looking at you, and I shall not longer be accountable for my actions. For instance, I might—" He leaned toward her as

though he were about to illustrate what he might do.

She looked calmly at him. "If there is any danger of that, take your watch and time yourself. Tell me when twenty-nine minutes have passed."

With the watch in hand and his eyes upon the dial, he continued the conversation.

"It is now twenty-nine minutes and a fraction over," he said at last. "I give you warning."

She rose with a slow and leisurely movement. She crossed the room, saying as she did so: "To avoid the display of frenzy, I shall go for my walk. I always do at this hour of the day. I might motor, had I not heard once that if one would keep young, he should never ride where he could walk. You may come with me, if you wish."

"If I wish!" he said humbly. "I thought for a moment that I was to be turned from your door alone. Your asking me to go with you is like having Heaven opened to one."

"I knew it. I could not deny you the only glimpse you will ever have."

Three blocks from the park entrance the pike begins. A short distance further on lies the county bridge, from which extends a road winding over low hills and cutting close against the side of a high mountain.

"Let us turn back here," said the woman.

"No, let us go on. I could walk forever this way with you."

"I am tempted to put you to the test. I am confident that before an hour would pass you would suggest turning back."

"A test will prove that I am not a mere maker of phrases, but a doer of deeds."

"When deeds are those of a carpet knight. Shall we turn back?"

"No, please. Let us walk yet further. But perhaps I bore you?" He gave her a quick, inquiring glance.

"It doesn't matter. One should not object to being bored—if only once in three years." She moved on down the road.

"Do you know, Sara Virginia, it does

me good to talk with you. When I grow puffed up with self-esteem and begin to feel that I really am something worth while, you show me my proper place; I learn that I am but the scum of the earth. I sometimes wonder that you bother at all with me. I used to fancy that you really cared, worthless though I was. Why did you bother at all with me, Sara Virginia?"

"I saw possibility of good in you. I looked upon you as a diamond which had been hidden in the mire. I saw possibilities within you. Railroad magnate though you were, I always felt there was a little spark of good left in you. It was my ambition to fan it into flame."

"How sweet of you! You have done nobly, although results do not justify such commendation. There are other means to reach me, however. I think an autographed copy of your books would encourage me. It would keep me in touch with the world. I would feel that I was not alone, and when I am tempted to go astray I could look at your autograph and know that someone recognized the good in me. You will give me a copy?"

"No."

"Why not?" They had come to the bend of the road. Here the bank had been protected by a thick planting of poplar trees. The spot was secluded, sequestered, sylvan. He was one who made the most of his opportunities along all lines. He slipped his arm through hers, and held her hand tight in his own.

"Oh, girlie, if one could only know what you really think!"

"I can tell you that—if you are referring to my books. My writing is my work. I have been told that one should not talk shop. Why should I bore my friends with samples of my handicraft? Do you send your friends a nicely developed map of some new road?"

"No, but I have sent my boy's blue prints—" He could have bitten his tongue off at the slip.

"That is the first time you have mentioned your boy. I could not understand your reticence on the subject at

first; I would not believe the reports of your marriage."

"Why, did you think I would go to my grave wearing the willow?"

"Not that. There were neither invitations nor announcements. Knowing that you liked things done in order and after the dictates of Madame Fashion, I could not understand this lapse in what should have been the important thing in your life."

For the instant words adequate to the occasion failed him. He pressed her hand a little more tenderly and drew her closer to him as they walked.

She drew herself away. "Do you wish me to lose my respect for you? Though affection went long ago, I hoped you would retain my respect. But if one thing in life displeases me more than another, it is a man who, in honor bound to another, forgets himself and goes as far as convention or the other woman permits. I see nothing wrong when two unfettered persons keep a semblance of a love affair when the love itself is only a first rate counterfeit of the genuine; but when a man—"

She paused suddenly. Perhaps it came to her that whatever he was or was not, she was not his mentor. Perhaps she was taking upon her own shoulders the cloak the right to wear which belonged to another woman.

She was seized with contrition.

"I am unkind," she cried with more feeling than she had shown before. "I have not talked with you for three years and may talk only a short time, and I use that time to criticise your conduct. I am unkind. I should not have spoken so."

"Do not apologize, and do not cease on my account. It gives you some satisfaction, and does not affect me in the least."

"Look!" She pointed where the road bent about the upper ledge of the hill, and although a mile or more distant, was visible from where they stood. "Do you see a touring car at the turn of the road?"

He drew nearer to her. They had had the width of the road between them. "I must get your point of view," he

said. He stepped back of her so close that, had she moved the slightest, her head would have touched his shoulder. She kept her eyes fixed upon the rapidly moving car, as though it alone was worthy of her interest.

However, her companion saw the change of color in her cheek and the soft, tender light in her eyes. She did care, after all. Her wit and repartee had been her shield and buckler. She had been beautiful before, with a hard, metallic beauty—but now she was alive, alluring and ten times more lovely.

He bowed his head lower as he whispered: "You intellectual women never do anything halfway. You are intense.

Even when you love, you make of it a strenuous thing."

"Yes, yes," she said softly. She moved forward a step and waved her hand slightly. The car had lessened its speed, and the chauffeur, at sight of her, slowed up before them.

"I thought I'd pick you up somewhere, Sara," said the occupant. He descended and stood beside her. He was a man of commanding presence and manner, and his eyes fell upon the woman.

"I am glad we did not miss you. I want my old friend Bob to meet my husband," said the woman, smiling sweetly at the companion of her walk.



MARCH

By LOUIS UNTERMEYER

WILFUL and wild and whimsical,
 Untamed, untaught, untrue—
 You smile, and happy spirits all
 Burst into songs of you.
 You change your mood with every hour.
 And when you are not gay
 You hold your sadness like a flower
 One plucks and throws away.

You sway the world below, above,
 In measures sensuous;
 You stop to sing, and for your love
 The world grows amorous.
 Yet as you strew the springtime's pearls
 With laughter everywhere,
 Your heart is like a dancing girl's
 And wanton as the air.



FLATTERY never gets contradicted.

THE LUMBER CAMP

By LOUISE DRISCOLL

GREAT Pan no longer sports with nymph and fawn;
There is no revelry in forest glade.
An ugly sawmill eats into the shade,
And cruel stumps lie bare
Where the old altars were.

Who knows? Among the chips that flew and lie
Rotting about the stump of that hewn tree,
The pipe that Ganymede once dropped may be,
Forgotten overlong,
Robbed of its song.

Suppose a workman found and lifted it,
Rough cut from the green reed, now shrunken dry,
Pierced with a few small holes to loose the cry
A god could breathe in it—what note today
Would a man play?

Perchance a poet in some prison wall
Of coarser clay or less considered dirt,
With throbbing heart against a flannel shirt,
Will find it there and take
And, feeling power wake—

Will—sweet, O sweet—breathe soul in pagan flute.
Then must the wood gods answer, though long dead,
And frightened wild things come back comforted.
*But still I hear the ax ring and the rush
Of a tree crashing in the underbrush.*



HE'S a wise self-made man who takes the tag off.

FARDIE AND LI'L BOY

By CLARA CHAPLINE THOMAS

IT is very difficult to imbue the living room of a small apartment "up in the west nineties" in New York with any individuality. There always seems to be the same number of windows similarly placed, and two doors at precisely the same angle with reference to the windows, one opening into an infinitesimal hallway, the other leading to regions within.

After one has contemplated such an apartment one falters somewhat in voicing that old truism that no two things in nature are exactly alike. One fact may be relievedly recorded, however: the living rooms may be differentiated into two classes—those with fireplaces and those without. Ruth Harder had insisted on the former variety.

"We must have a fireplace even if we have to go without windows," she maintained. "We must have something to build pictures for our tired brains. Don't you think so, too?" And the other prime factor of the "we" acquiesced. People had always acquiesced in Ruth Harder's insinuations—mainly because, after she had firmly stated her position, basing it on an incontrovertibly logical foundation, she invariably affixed the childish appeal in a voice that trailed sweetly upward: "Don't you think so, too?"

No man with a spark of chivalry in his make-up or woman with a gleam of motherliness could forget that final pleading note long enough even to attempt refutation. It was the revealing theme of her character—the vigorous, well trained will forcing exquisitely sensitive faculties into a position on the firing line, whence they tremblingly turned, as the opposing guns were

trained, with a womanish appeal for reinforcements. It was only those who knew her with an almost sacred intimacy, however, who interpreted this little trick as the keynote of character. Those who read as they run jotted it down hastily as the mannerism of a well poised, serenely confident personality who, by the power of gracious womanhood, seemed to pass unchallenged through the gate of success where a merely clever woman would have had to produce an impeccable passport.

Tonight Ruth Harder rested easily against the soft leather cushions of the roomy, squarely built chair, her slipper-shod feet negligently crossed and reaching comfortably toward the crackling warmth of the grate fire, as she read with a wistfully humorous curve of the lips an effusively enthusiastic interview with herself written by a new adorer—a youthful woman journalist. The reading lamp on a table littered with loose sheets of manuscript was rather far away, and burned dimly at best, the haunting shadows creeping ever nearer the heart of the light. As she lifted the newspaper with its heavy headline and crude sketch of her into better position, she threw a swift smile in the direction of the lamp as the words fell on her ears: "You'll hurt your eyes, dear."

"Listen," she exclaimed in mock imperiousness, "that you may know how I shall appear in my crown of glory with my harp in my hand. No one has ever really appreciated me before. This is the way my little friend with the blonde hair sees me:

"Although she is that *rara avis*, the successful woman playwright, Ruth Harder has lost none

of the charm which lies in simplicity untouched by the glare of the spotlight. Hers is one of those fine spirits unchanged by outward condition of success or failure, because they can at will be enclosed within impenetrable walls which shut out material things. Thus may they fortress themselves during a long siege of adversity because the foodstores of the imagination are inexhaustible."

Ruth Harder paused a moment and consciously avoided a backward glance.

"It is hard to explain how I write my plays," the dramatist said whimsically. "I do not formulate a plot by mixing a few ingredients of circumstance together, add characters until of the right consistency and flavor with dialogue to taste. I think that I must work backward. There is a consciousness of character first—I can't explain it any more clearly—and then I seem to hear—I do hear—the words spoken as that character would speak. Of course, that character is instinctively associated with others—his particular little life group, I call it—and they do things, and—well, that's all. I wish I could make you feel how very real they are to me," she added, clasping her hands with a childish gesture. "They are so real that sometimes—it makes me almost afraid."

The woman who was reading it aloud shrank back sensitively. "I'm sure I didn't say that," she murmured with flushed cheeks. "I—I didn't mean to say that! And to have one's innermost feelings emblazoned in a 'feature story' of a Sunday paper—I hate it! The other reporters haven't stuck a pin through me and spiked me up on the wall."

"Never mind, little wife," and the comfort which crept about her came not so much from the tone and the words as from the aura of protectiveness which enveloped them. "Success, you know, is never a gift—one must always buy—buy—and you are paying for yours on the instalment plan—that's all. You generously pulled upon your heart-strings a little too far in that last payment. We must learn to be niggardly of our precious things—before swine." There was a tightening of the voice in the last words which indicated that a primitive instinct had forced them out.

The paper dropped from her hands, and she sat quietly gazing into the fire, which fitfully flickered, and the reading lamp grew dimmer. She turned her

body slightly so that the globe might come within range of her vision, and rested her eyes upon the dark head just raised from a battered legal tome bristling with paper markers. The flash of fire in the eyes when it met hers only lighted a whimsical smile that crept about the firm lips as the practical remark was added: "We must have a new mantle for this lamp, dear; remind me of it when I start downtown in the morning."

Upon the ears of anyone else the commonplace words would have been unsympathetically irrelevant, but Ruth had the perfect understanding. Her smile was very tremulous as she stretched out her hand as if to touch the dark hair.

"I suppose," she murmured softly, "that there are many men who strive to protect women from hurts from without, for that is more a matter of their own pride—but I wonder if there is any but you who conquers for the one woman the foes of her own spirit?" She laughed in the fullness of joy, but there was a catch in her breath as she added childishly: "Why, lad, just the minute that my morbid sensitiveness over an indiscreet spiritual immodesty knocks at my door, you seem to know who it is, and turn the key upon him with such well feigned unconsciousness that it seems a lack of appreciation of your artistry to take note of it. Yes, lad o' mine, I shall remind you in the morning."

There was a boyish laugh and the volume closed with a snap. "That's enough for one night; I'll have time to look up the other point before court opens in the morning. Now"—she felt him swing himself impudently upon the arm of her chair, and her head sank back into the hollow of his broad shoulder—"tell me, what could be more consequent, relevant and material than the suggestion of new gas mantles if you insist on sitting 'way over here to do your reading?"

She gave a little sigh of content. "Nothing," she murmured. "We are so proud that the mind which ferrets out the intricacies of municipal scandals can descend to being reminded of

gas mantles by us, that's all. Such a home-loving lad as it is!"

His reply was a closer pressure of the arms that enclosed her, and she rested contentedly against his heart. She felt the light, quiet touch of his lips upon her hair, and a tranquil relaxation upon his greater strength took the place of the tense resentment of a few minutes before.

The clock on the mantel in front of her chimed silverly clear—ten. She gave a slight start as of one almost sleeping, and her eyes met a pair of very honest blue ones under a mist of gold-colored tousled hair. The figure that stood in front of her was very small, very contrite and absurdly chubby in what are known to the initiated as "bear nighties." "Why, Li'l Boy," she said, surprised, "what in the world possessed you to wake up? Come, let Fardie put you back to bed."

The chubby figure shivered and drew nearer, looking at her pleadingly.

"Big bear comed," he said tremulously; "most ate Li'l Boy all up."

"Whoa there, son," drawled the voice whose suggestion of reserve strength had calmed Ruth's quivering sensitiveness but a moment before. "Don't you know that a bear couldn't get in there if he tried? Fardie locked all the doors. You and your mother are just alike—always see bears and things that 'most eat you all up. Here now"—she felt the small body swung down into her arms—"you cuddle down there for a minute, and muvver will tell you a nice sleepy story, and then Fardie will carry you in—and muvver will tuck you all in tight again and—how's that?"

By way of answer, Li'l Boy's head nestled softly upon her breast, and her arm curved about his sturdy little body, the other hand cuddling into warmth the small feet encased in the stubby "bear nighty." She was less conscious of her own voice chanting a story of "little white lambs" than of the sleepy relaxation of Li'l Boy's body and her own dreamy comfort in the strong arm which enfolded her. The fire had almost gone out; the end of a charred stick thudded softly, and she started.

She held her breath until the sense of touch in her arms grew apprehensively acute—she seemed to listen with her body—but Li'l Boy's body breathed softly still.

"Take him to bed, Fardie," she whispered. "I'll come—to tuck him in." The little lad was lifted from her arms, and she saw the sleepy blue eyes open, glazed into unconsciousness. "Li'l lambs—Fardie," was the drowsy murmur, and then the tousled head sank on the broad shoulder. The woman in the chair watched them until they crossed the threshold, and then she rose to follow. . . .

The electric bell of the door gave two swift whirrs, and she paused for a minute. Her hand passed across her eyes dreamily, but at a second impatient "B—r—r—r," the gesture melted into a commonplace brushing of the hair from her forehead. She smiled tremulously as she moved toward the door and opened it.

"Why, Mandy!" she exclaimed, as her eyes fell on the portly colored woman with a basket on her head. "What brings you here this time of night? I wondered what the elevator boy could be thinking of to let anybody come right up to the room like this."

"Well, you see, Mis' Hahdeh, Ah done tole yo' housemate, Mis' Dawson, dat Ah'd sho git dese yere clo's ovah hyah today, 'cause she 'low she gwine on de road tomorrah 'n' gwine pack to-night. Now Ah jes' couldn't git 'em done no soonah, and mah ole man 'n' dat shif'less Jim ain' home, so Ah brung 'em mahse'f. Tain' too late fo' de packin'?" she added anxiously.

Ruth Harder smiled. "No, Mandy, Miss Dawson isn't home from the theater yet, and then I'm going to help her to pack. There—you may lay the things on the table or any place where you can find a spot not covered with papers. Nobody will come tonight, so I don't mind."

The old colored woman puffed with the discomfort of "too, too solid flesh" as she lazily distributed the dainty lingerie upon convenient articles of furniture.

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"Well, Ah cert'n'y is glad she ain't been callin' foh 'em. Ah reckoned dat she didn't 'spec' to git 'em back when she say, an' so she say soonah dan she hadda have 'em," and a series of chuckles shook her portly frame.

Ruth Harder nodded, laughing. "You're right, Mandy; you're always right. I don't know how Miss Dawson and I could have kept house without you."

Mandy poised her hands on her hips. "You'se gwine be powahful lonesome, ain't you, Mis' Hahdeh, wif dat giggly Mis' Dawson gone? Or is you gwine go, too?"

"Oh, no, I shall remain here—this is my home, you know. Miss Dawson will be back with the rest of the company in the spring."

Mandy's face bore the pained expression of one searching for an idea just out of reach. Suddenly her mental hook caught and the notion flourished to the surface. Her face gleamed.

"Say, Mis' Hahdeh, wa'n't dat piece in the paper Sunday 'bout you?"

Ruth nodded, smiling.

"Ah knew it!" exclaimed the old colored woman joyously. "Ah tole my boy Jim: 'Why, Ah know dat lady—dat's Mis' Hahdeh. Ah's been doin' her wawshin' foh ovah two months now. She lives up in the Alexandah wif a actress lady.' Don't think that pichah looked much like you, honey. How'n de worl' dey git yo' mouf all scrooged up like dat?" She picked up her basket as Ruth laughed and moved toward the door. Then she paused.

"It sho will be powahful lonesome," she said tentatively. "Know many folks in N' Yawk?"

Ruth's brown head negatived the notion.

"Ain' thinkin' o' gettin' married, is you?" Mandy persisted with an interest far removed from unfriendly impertinence.

Again Ruth scouted the idea, this time merrily.

Mandy pensively scratched her forehead. "Well, maybe my Jim's right afteh all," she granted. "Ah tole Jim you was likely to get hitched mos' any

time—a pretty 'ooman like you is—jess like a girl; an' he say: 'Aw, what she want to git married foh? Ain't she mekin a mint o' money fo' huh own se'f?' But jess the same—"

"But didn't you see what the newspaper lady said, Mandy?" she queried with mischievous eyes. "That I am one of the few women who are sufficient unto themselves—whom it would be a sacrilege to consider as merely another's helpmeet. And, besides, didn't you read that I said that I had my art and my work, and that was my whole life?" A little sigh crept out at the words, despite the bravely smiling lips.

Mandy moved toward the door, and veered about determinedly.

"Dat's all right, honey, 'bout bein' a 'fishent 'ooman and havin' yo' aht and yo' wuk; Ah's a 'fishent 'ooman mah-se'f, and Ah reckon dat Ah could mek a heap mo' in a day 'n' mah ole man could mek in a week. Ah is awful glad o' mah aht and mah wuk, 'cause it kep' me from thinkin' too long o' mah misery—but if Ah hadda choose any day o' mah life 'tween mah ole man wif his rheumatiz and mah shif'less Jim on de right han' an' mah aht and wuk on de lef' hand—Ah reckon dat mah aht and wuk could go plumb to thundah. You's a 'ooman, honey—you's a 'fishent 'ooman—you may be a Suff'agette f'all Ah know—but you cayn't fool Mandy wif no aht and wuk business—no, sirree!"

She moved majestically out, and Ruth closed the door and stood looking at it thoughtfully.

"You're right, Mandy," she said, with trembling lips. She went to the table and turned down the light.

"I guess I'll have to get a new mantle in the morning," she said aloud.

Perhaps it was the sound of her own voice that broke the tension of self-control. A quick, dry sob escaped and opened the breach in the wall of her fortress. As the wave of passionate grief and longing swept over her she threw herself upon the floor and buried her face in the cushions of the big chair by the fire.

"O Fardie!" she sobbed in a heart-broken way. "O Li'l Boy!"

THE COMMAND OF A TINY SOUL

By G. VERE TYLER

"**W**HERE were you last night, Denise?"
"It doesn't matter."
"You think that?"
"Yes."

He had confronted her in her bedroom sitting wrapped in an elaborately embroidered kimono in a large low arm-chair. Her small feet, shod in Japanese slippers, were resting on a pile of blue velvet cushions, and on a small table beside her was a bunch of pink roses in a silver filigree vase, a bottle of bromo seltzer and a syphon.

When he entered the room she sprang to her feet, and the two were facing each other sharply.

She was pale, and her childishly youthful face looked old and drawn from recent dissipation. Her inky black hair, hanging loosely about her face, waved naturally, and its uncombed condition was curly; her eyes were a clear, intelligent gray beneath narrow well defined brows. She was not especially tall, not over the average height, but there was sufficient length of limb, and she carried herself with the haughty grace of a young Indian. Her husband, her direct opposite, was a blond, rather heavily built man, handsome, well groomed, with a worldly, partly intellectual air that carried conviction. He was called a forceful man and felt himself to be one, but he realized, as others did not, that he had never dominated his wife. There were two reasons that made this, in spite of her outward deportment, a self-evident fact: the recognition of her own strong will, that he daily expected and feared would assert itself; and his weakness concerning her, the power her

strange wild beauty and unique personality wielded over him.

"Do you know what time you came in?"

"Yes."

"And that you stole out of the house and returned alone?"

"Yes."

"And you have no explanation to offer for—for such conduct?"

She started to speak, but hesitated and was silent.

"Have you?" His voice was so sharp that he saw her quiver like a frightened hunting dog. But she remained silent, looking at him intently with her clear, straight gaze, her beauty blighted in a way by her chalky pallor but none the less irresistible to him.

"Yes," she said finally. "Sit down. I have an explanation to make; there is something I may as well tell you."

She motioned him to a chair with a businesslike gesture and took her own seat. Before she spoke she took a rose from the vase, smelt of it and then laid it on the table beside her.

"What I have to say to you," she said, looking straight at him, "is in the form"—she hesitated again—"well, like a confession. I have often thought of saying it before, but the occasion did not arise and I put it off. This is it," she added abruptly and, as it were, bracing herself. "I am always being called what the world—what *you* would, I suppose, call bad. No, please don't interrupt me! What I did last night was the final yielding to what I am always wanting to do, what my nature is eternally dictating to me. It's the same thing that made me run away from home, a beau-

tiful quiet home where it was possible to live the life of an angel, and go on the stage where it was possible to live the life of a devil. I fought *that* call—don't think I didn't—but it was too strong for me; it overcame me, and at last I stole out of the house, just as I did last night, and responded to it—I went."

Her hand wandered to the rose again, but she resisted it and continued after a slight upward fling of the head: "I was born, it seems, with an inclination for the artificial, the things and places that are called evil, and the inane, purposeless, ephemeral life that they embody. I have never liked the good places, the good things, the good people of the world. They pretend things; they claim things. The evil places do not; they are just what they are. I like to look on the unrecognized people of the world, the people who aren't anything, who never have the hope of being anything, but who have the courage to live—to go on existing. There has always seemed to me a vital interest in those beings who never touch realities—how they must wonder about them—these creatures who circle about like moths and live always in the glare of lights that finally prove their destruction."

An eager light flashed in the tired eyes fixed upon him, and he felt the touch of it with a slight shrinking of fear. She was holding him spellbound, and he knew that she knew it—knew that the power of the evil she was eulogizing was being wrought through her upon him. It lent excitement to her voice as she continued:

"I like to be where such beings are. I like the places where gilt statues twined in artificial flowers take the place of marble ones. I like to watch the scenes that high, broad mirrors reflect and repeat the reflection as far as the eye can reach. I like to study these mirrors contrived to deceive but that yet reflect the truth. I like to watch the passionate, elusive reflections of the lights, the dusty, false fruits and flowers, the flashing glass on the tables. I like the reflection of the unintelligent people assembled there, the girls with blank painted faces seated at the tables leaning on

sharp elbows or wandering aimlessly about in grotesque hats and the cast-off costumes of actresses and the rich and that bespeak senseless effort. They are like the soulless, vain swans that float aimlessly about on the artificial lakes in parks that reflect trees and stars. They invite consideration, these mysterious girls who never suggest homes and who seem to be always looking for something they lost years and years ago and can never find. Isn't there something pathetic in the soul that doesn't assume, doesn't even affect a virtue and—and isn't there something also grand in it?"

She put the question abruptly, and recognizing through the error of her remarks an unexpected depth, he started to speak, but she raised her hand protestingly and went on:

"You and I and those like us are always pretending and attempting to benefit from our pretenses. They can't even pretend to pretend. They have to stand, as it were, naked and barefaced to the world with not a shadowy veil between them and the truth. Don't you think that is courageous? I sometimes think that that was what called me, the courage of it, the responsibility of assuming oneself without aid—just in a haphazard manner, being."

She paused as if in deference to some past memory and then went on: "Did you ever notice how ravenously such beings eat—always as though the meal were a surprise and might be taken away from them before they could finish it? Always snatching at a bare and, as it were, momentary existence!"

She closed her eyes and then continued in a different voice: "And some of them are so beautiful, but with a strange beauty that contains nothing, a deaf and dumb beauty. Isn't it enough to wring the heart—beauty like that? Beauty that is young but that looks so far distinctly old; voices that are so high in pitch but that never can carry conviction! Beauty that can be scorned, voices that never can plead! I like to be in the midst of all this and think all these things. You can't understand it—I know, no one can; that's why I have never tried to ex-

plain it to you; but it calls me—it always has—and that is what I was doing last night—I was answering the call. I stole out and yielded to the fascination. I *experienced*. I don't experience"—she waved her hand—"very often *here!*"

"And if any of my friends, answering the same call as yourself, had seen you there—wherever you were?" he asked with a cold sneer.

She became a shade paler. "I thought of that," she answered, "thought it all out"—she spoke slowly—"but it didn't hold me back."

"And since it didn't, don't you consider yourself," he inquired in the same cynical voice, "a rather dangerous possession?"

"I suppose I am. But"—she paused and a terrified expression crossed her features—"at any rate, I am telling you the truth about myself, and that will enable you to decide what to do about me."

A short, sharp laugh broke from him, but it did not deter her. "Isn't it best to know the truth about people," she asked, "people that you live with—best to know them just as they are?"

"I am afraid," he answered, "I don't think it is, but in your case, since you have begun to unveil yourself, your most amazing personality, you had as well go on."

She looked frightened again. "But what might happen to me?"

"You have said you would leave it to me to decide."

Her brow contracted. "But that might not be fair to myself! You might forget something!"

"What?"

"That, in spite of the fact that I am bad by nature and that you married me on account of that, only because I appealed to the worst in you, I have learned to love you."

He rose and went over and stood in front of her. "What do you mean by that?" He questioned her menacingly.

"What I say!" she flashed back. "Do you suppose that I don't know? Have you ever demanded anything of me but my worst?"

An angry frown darkened his brow.

"How do you dare say that to me?" he asked under his breath.

"Because you have lived it!"

He bent forward, took her wrist and peered threateningly into her eyes. "Stop that!" he commanded. "You may go too far!"

"Now that I have begun, I won't stop!" she retorted. "It's true; and all the while you have been living out your worst nature through me I have been subduing mine for you, for your sake! Is that fair? For two years I have been holding in abeyance all my natural inclinations, holding myself down for you and—and I meant to hold out—I fought to hold out; but last night, when you stayed away, I broke down! I waited and waited for you! I was hurt and disappointed and angry. I cried—and then it was as though ten thousand voices shouted in my ears: 'Be yourself! Be yourself! Do what you like! *He* does!'"

He still had hold of her wrist and his clasp tightened until the pain was severe. Tears flashed in her upturned eyes, but her voice was steady and rang out: "I fought; I fought hard for two years, but I broke down once, that's all! Can't you be generous and say that you are sorry for me?"

He made no answer, but freed her wrist and stood upright.

"You don't know how I have tried," she went on, "in spite of—well, what I told you just now. In spite of knowing it all the time, I learned to love *you* in a different way, in a way that's like the sun on the mountain top, and I was always watching that light and trying to stand in it. I knew that you never saw it, that you saw me only in the shadow of a red lampshade, but all the same I tried, and I wanted to hold out; wanted to be to myself all the things that you never thought of considering me. I had pride about it, secret pride, and also I thought somehow you might some day see the light and me standing in it and—but I broke down—I failed, and I despise myself!" She rose to her feet and a sob choked her. "I failed," she repeated. "Can't you say you are sorry for me?"

He looked at her, half stunned by the wonderful appeal in her splendid eyes, but before he could answer her she burst forth again. "Do you remember Jack London's 'The Call of the Wild'? Do you remember Buck? I have been trying to do my duty in the position I found myself just like that tortured old dog! I've read that book over and over, and every time I read it I trembled because I felt that sooner or later some day I would respond to the call and steal away and go back to the wolves. Isn't it *awful*? And it wasn't weakness—you may think so, but it wasn't! Sometimes people are called weak when they are too strong for themselves. I am one of that kind, I suppose."

He turned from her, and taking an empty wine bottle from a silver tub, held it up. "Do you call this being strong?" he asked, touching the bottle with one finger.

"No; that's being weak. I admit that. But do you know why I take it?" she asked, her eyes blazing with sudden pain. "It's to let the watchdogs of self-restraint sleep when I can't stand them any longer and want a few hours' respite and rest. You see, you don't know me—you've always seen only one part of me, the part that puts out my light and that I have learned to hate. I've taken that when I was worn out and tired of living up to all that I thought would—might make you see the light. It was just like sitting down on the bottom step in a dark hall and resting and not caring. Go and sit down!" she burst forth in a sudden rage as though inflamed by remembrance. "Don't stand over me with that in your hand like an executioner!"

He replaced the bottle quietly, but remained standing. "Your clever arguments, your flights of imagination, will not free you from the penalty of last night's proceedings, Denise," he said deliberately.

"I am not asking to be freed—I don't expect it! But no matter what you do, how unforgiving and cruel you may choose to be, it's not *you* who are going to make me pay the penalty. It's myself, my own nature, that will daily,

hourly, every minute of my life as it always has, deal out my punishment. I have always had to exist in enforced environment! Do you know what that is? It's a whip with a thousand lashes that are never still—and they *can* sting!" She laughed. "I am always being punished, and that's why I thought, if I explained, *you* might be generous!"

"What did you do last night?" He was looking at her calmly now, a mingled glance of distrust and admiration at what might be merely cleverness on her part.

"Nothing. I was only an onlooker."

"Where?"

"Many places. I went from one place to another, wherever I liked. I sat at tables, sometimes alone, but if people sat down and talked to me I talked to them, and I drank with them and invited them to drink with me, and I listened to the idle, vapid, shallow talk, all the while marveling at the fascination for me of lives in which, when summed up, there seemed to be so little. But that wasn't what held me! It was the contrasting visions that they and their surroundings evoked. In one place I was seated alone at a table in a corner under a large imitation tree blooming in electric light oranges, and in the mirror opposite, back of all the people, I saw the garden of Eden before the serpent crawled in. I saw Adam and Eve, and it seemed to me that you were Adam and I was Eve. You were asleep, and I was sitting by your side with my hands clasped in front of my knees, looking on all the gentle, peaceful animals moving gracefully about and smelling all the wonderful flowers that were blooming everywhere. And I wondered why God made the serpent at all, and let it crawl in and make trouble. At last, after I don't know how long, I got up and walked out of the place as in a dream, pleasurably feeling the eyes of all the half-intoxicated people following me, and got into, not a cab but a street car. Sitting there in the corner of the car half asleep, and with the painted faces of the women I had left and the coarse, stupid faces of the men floating before me, I still lived in the vision; and

that moment just as it was, just as the commonplace environment was, with a vision of beauty and ecstasy beyond me seemed life, life to me! How can I explain it? I can't!"

There was a little catch in her throat on the last word, and then she went on: "After what seemed to me a long while I got off the car and came in here, and it was all so soft and padded that a feeling of despair came over me, and it seemed to me that not only I but everybody in this house, from yourself to the lowest servant, was afraid to live; and it terrified me and made a feeling of hatred come into my heart." She pointed to the empty wine bottle. "I ordered *that* to be brought me, and after I had drunk a part of it I sat here in this chair, an hour, I suppose, thinking, thinking of many things, and then I went to bed. Now you know all!" She laughed again, a merry, hysterical laugh this time. "What's to be my punishment? What are *you* going to add?" she questioned with mock archness.

He did not answer her, but sat perfectly still, staring at her, overcome by the realization of the necessity to resist her, her beauty, her cleverness, her arguments, all the things in her that she might be using to liberate herself and hold him enslaved. But in *her* eyes he was standing, as it were, in judgment over her. She gazed back at him eagerly, as though something unexpected would appear that she might cling to.

Suddenly a bright light flashed in her eyes and she sprang to her feet. "Since I *am* bad," she exclaimed, "and have got to fight my nature every day, why don't you help me?"

He still made no reply, and saw the spasm of pain that his non-response to her entreaty had caused her. She turned from him, flung herself on her knees in the chair, and with her back to him and her arms hanging limp over it, commenced sobbing.

Several moments passed thus while he still sat staring at her in silence, looking

dully at the slender, nervous frame half lost in the folds of the vivid kimono.

Just as he rose to his feet to approach her, she sprang up and faced him with a kind of explosive gesture.

"Why don't you help me?" she exclaimed again.

"How can I help you, Denise—who who confess that you are by nature bad, that all your tendencies are bad?"

"By tearing open the bad and trying to find something good in me! By hunting in the weeds to see if there may not be one flower that is trying to grow! That's how! I don't need punishment; I'm always being punished by life, by my struggles, by myself; I need help."

He looked at her face, transfigured and glorified by the feeble shining of a developing soul demanding its rights, a soul that the very environment she had denounced with its self-imposed effort and self-restraint was causing to burst forth. A flush sprang to his cheeks as he also recognized that he had never thought about this girl's soul at all, never demanded of her that she possess one—and here it was, feeble but insistent, trying to present itself to him, and unconsciously commanding him to look to its development. He understood the revolt in her of his idealization of her body, her resentment that he had never tried to see anything fine in her but only that which was beautiful and pleased his eye and his senses. He saw her standing in her self-created light that she had been trying to make him see, saw the soul hunger-tortured by the overeulogized body, saw the one glorious flower struggling to bloom—no, already blooming in the midst of the weeds that not only the world but he had daily helped to cultivate. A tremendous pathos enveloped her, and a sense of humiliation crept through him as he approached her with reverential mien.

"I will help you, my girl," he said, and opened his arms to her.



LOVE AND HONESTY

By W. J. LAMPTON

IT was the woman speaking. "You know I am rich?" she said, half in hope, half in fear.

And the man: "If I had not known it, I should not have asked you to marry me."

"You are frank."

"I am honest."

"The same in effect. But why so honest?"

"Honesty is the best policy."

"I despise policy."

"And honesty?"

"I fear it."

"Why fear?"

"Because it reminds me that I have a conscience."

"Have you?"

"I hope so."

"Then why have you so cruelly—I shall not say shamelessly, for it is the nature of women to be coquettish—why have you so cruelly laughed at a dozen men who have thrown themselves at your feet?"

"Because I knew why they did it."

"Because they loved you?"

"No. Because my feet were shod with gold."

"How did you know they did not love you for yourself alone?"

"Because in each instance I told the man I was rich, and he vowed he loved the woman only, the wealth was nothing—he cared for me, not for my money."

"And I?"

"You were honest."

"How do you know?"

"You said you loved me but would not marry me without the money."

"Lovers say many things."

"Not when what they say means only loss to them."

"And you fear honesty?"

"Yes."

"Because of conscience?"

"Not now."

"No? Then why?"

"It may mean loss to me."

"A selfish reason."

"Yes, for love is the supreme selfishness."

"And you love me?"

"From the beginning."

"Then I need not have been honest?"

"Is not love enough?"

"It is more—with honesty."

THE LITTLE VOICES

By JAY HARDY

IT was a Sunday morning at Armenonville, one of those mornings in September when the mild heat of the Parisian summer begins to be laden with the first tender mists and fragrant decay of autumn. It was still early—from a human and breakfasting point of view—and enchantingly quiet. The leaves fluttering from the enfringing trees about the oval pool could almost, with the aid of a little imagination, be heard to meet the water; and from the direction of the Bois came the slightest murmur of wheels and hoofs and voices.

A gentleman who sat behind the rhododendron bed, where the infant Bacchus sports with the open-fronted *pavillon* at his left, felt himself, though in a haunt of the world, encompassed by the nameless charm of a French forest, the ancientness, the remoteness, the impregnation with human memories that goes with misty green tree trunks and the smell of damp ivy.

A gentleman who can hear leaves fall and feel conscious of Old World charm at Armenonville must necessarily be possessed of a little imagination. Mr. John Browne had imagination, a temperament that leaned toward literature, and he was by way of frequenting cafés and tea places in the Bois for the sake of the literary inspiration they afforded. And although he was not by nature of an unsocial bent, he found that the pleasures of observation did him most good when he enjoyed them alone.

So he sat smoking innumerable cigarettes, while the morning wore on toward twelve o'clock. From being behind the scenes with nature he began to assist at the beginning of the daily human drama. Waiters fluttered ex-

pectantly about the door of the *pavillon*. The band, in red jackets, climbed into their seats and began playing "Ah, Si Vous Voulez de l'Amour." A handsome Frenchman of forty, gray-haired and beautifully turned out in brown riding clothes, who had been occupying the center of the stage for quite five minutes while he drank his *aperitif*, admired once more his well turned leg and looked about to gather in stray feminine admiration; but the simultaneous arrival of three motors and a dogcart got upon his nerves, so he paid his reckoning and rode away in a style of equestrianism all unworthy of his heroic appearance. A lady in white serge and a new Carlier turban dismounted from one of the motors, and was escorted by four fluttering waiters to a seat by the window. From another stepped a middle-aged pair; the husband indifferent, the wife frankly gray as to hair, elaborately carmined as to lips, and followed by an anxious-faced youthful admirer. A gorgeous French car gave up an American family, the women plainly and inconspicuously dressed in black, the two daughters looking eagerly about for what they had been told they ought not to see. Several ladies, in whose costumes summer and autumn met in piquant incongruity, arrived on foot. Others of the same *monde* came in cabs or motors with cavaliers.

Browne looked at them, smoked and dreamed on. His retreat beneath the infant Bacchus was uninvaded. He began to think that thought that has run through so many literary heads, that we Americans have been cheated of something, in having with us no such vivid stream of daily life as can be seen

anywhere at any hour of the day in a foreign capital. If he had only been born French instead of American, if only he were privileged to give his imagination full play, instead of pruning it down to the requirements and limitations of the supposititious American *jeune fille*, what might he not do, what heights might he not attain, what romantic encounters a little off color might he not amuse himself with!

He leaned back in enjoyment of the idea. Vagrant thoughts began to run through his head, felicitous phrases, snatches of dialogue.

"You did not come as you promised yesterday."

"No."

"I waited for you—waited with hope, waited without hope, waited through the dusk until it was quite dark. If I had been a woman I should have wept."

"I could not come to you, my friend. He—my husband—was ill."

"Ah! Were you needed to wait on him? Are you his servant?"

"No—I did nothing for him. He would not let me. He would not even have known if I had left the house."

"Then why did you fail me?"

"You do not understand, my friend. It was because he would not have known."

After this exhausting effort of the imagination Browne looked up. It was the murmur of voices, perhaps, that had aroused him from his reverie. Two people had seated themselves at the table next his. The man who faced him was young, with the pallid, effeminate face that in France somehow appeals to the hearts of women; he leaned tenderly across the table toward his companion, his eyes liquid, his voice yearning. Browne could not see the woman's face, but he thought she had a back that was eloquent of romance; she was presumably young and appealing.

The two began to speak.

"Tu n'es pas venu chez moi hier soir."

"Non!"

"Je t'ai attendu—avec confiance, en désespoir."

Browne sat up and heard the conversation out. Phrase for phrase, thought for thought, it was the very dialogue he

had himself imagined, delivered with all the fervor and intensity the most fastidious playwright could have asked from his actors. Upon "*It was because he would not have known*" they fell silent.

"I am mad!" said Browne to himself.

"I only thought I composed it first!"

And then the musicians began playing "*Mon Cœur S'Ouvre à Ta Voix*" out of "*Sanson et Dalila*," with the languorous swing that bands in Paris understand so well, and Browne's nerves were soothed and he fell to musing again.

A sweet sadness possessed him, a sadness that was invaded by floating thoughts of love unreturned and amorous longing. Without any effort of the will or the imagination, the little voices somewhere at the back of his mind began to speak again.

"*Scruples*"—it was the masculine voice—"are the children of disillusion."

"No, no!"

"When he was well—he never knew; he never concerned himself with you. Did your mind ever turn away from me then because he did not know?"

"When he is well his mind is full of his schemes and ambitions—or with others than myself. If he does not need me then I cannot be unfaithful. If he is ill and alone, and should want me for one moment, and I not be there—then I should be a woman disgraced."

"Ah, you women!"

This last exclamation breathed itself into Browne's mind rather like a gasping admiration of his own cleverness at imagining feminine reasoning so well; and with this outburst his literary mind stopped functioning and stood still, as it were, to listen.

They began—the real voices:

"*Les scruples*"—yes, it was going right—"sont nés de désillusion."

II

"I SAY, Browne!"

Browne looked up reluctantly. There stood before him a friend "from home," one of those Americans to whom Paris is one continual Midway, peopled by curious but uninteresting aborigines,

speaking a jargon that no sane man could or would master.

"Wait a minute, Jackson!" entreated Browne, still straining his ears and trying to think he heard the echo of "*he never concerned himself with you.*"

"What for? I'm in a hurry. I'm with my aunt and cousin in the pavilion. Come on; I want to introduce you to 'em. I'm a little tired of 'em myself. You talk about books and plays to 'em; they like it."

"All right. Wait a minute."

"Lookin' for anybody?"

"No."

"Afraid to waste that cigarette?"

Browne rose with a sigh. His eaves-dropping, if it were to be thus interrupted, might be counted entirely unfruitful. He would never know whether the puppets had responded to his suggestion, or had wandered off into even more seductive byways of their own finding. The only consolation his retreat afforded him was a glimpse, for future reference, of his heroine's face. It was what you might call a "French" face: narrow, of an ivory whiteness, with a long nose, almond-shaped eyes under level eyebrows, artificially reddened lips—like a thousand other faces, except that in the eyes Browne thought he saw the light of almost fanatical romance.

It never rains but it pours—or perhaps there is something about Paris of a Sunday morning in September that transfigures femininity; for Jackson's dreaded cousin turned out to be quite the most charming girl Browne had ever met.

She was not too young, had sense and intelligence, a voice that gave emotions and a face that the coldest realist would have been under the necessity of describing as beautiful. She was sympathetic, too, and Browne immediately felt the desire to confide in her.

"What would you think," asked Browne, "if you sat mooning—you know people who write have to moon a good deal."

"Oh, do you write?" interjected the lady eagerly.

"I try to. If you sat mooning, and

you thought out a whole conversation, and presently two people who sat near you went through that same dialogue just as you had imagined it—what would you think?"

The idea immediately interested Miss Gardner. "Word for word?" she asked.

"Word for word, or idea for idea, only in French when you had thought of it in English. In the first place, would you listen?"

Miss Gardner, instead of answering straightway, meditated seriously, thus showing herself to be a young woman of principle.

"Well, I wouldn't intend to; but somehow," she admitted, "I think I'd have to. It would seem more as if they were listening to my thoughts than I to their conversation. Besides, it doesn't seem so bad to eavesdrop when people are speaking French, does it?"

Browne enjoyed this as a sample of feminine reasoning, and found it consoling in its moral tone; for though he had considered himself justified as an artist, he felt a bit ashamed of himself as a man.

"But what would you think?" he pursued.

"Oh, at first I'd be afraid I was crazy. I'd think I'd remembered backward, or that it was a mere coincidence."

"And if the coincidence happened again? If your thought and their words went on coinciding?"

"Then I'd believe I was a medium revealed. Why do you ask? Did such a thing really ever happen to you?"

Now Browne, thinking ahead, had foreseen that this was bound to come. The question that would naturally follow was: "Oh, do tell me—what did they say?" Whether because what they said was not exactly what he could with propriety retail to a *jeune fille*, or because he felt himself in a sense the unwilling guardian of the French lady's secret, something warned him that it was time to say "No."

"No," he said accordingly. "It—it was just an idea I had for a story."

Miss Gardner was obviously disappointed, and her interest in Browne cooled a little.

When Browne had taken his departure, and Jackson, with cousinly frankness, had mentioned the difficulty he had found in getting him in hand at all, and assigned as a reason Browne's inexplicable interest in a certain French lady who sat near him, her interest cooled still further. For Jackson, being an amiable blunderer, made it appear that Browne's interest in French ladies and their ways was a chronic weakness. It went with the literary temperament, it seemed.

"Look here," said Jackson; "he's gone back over by the laurels to look for her. Too bad—she's gone."

She had gone. It was quite true that Browne, under the shadow of the infant Bacchus, felt a vague disappointment.

Miss Gardner, being something in the line of a haughty beauty, tossed her head, curled her lips and said nothing.

III

BROWNE saw a good deal of the Gardners during the next two weeks, and it began to be evident to him that he had already committed the folly of falling in love with Margaret. It was very much against his better judgment that this came to pass, for he had come abroad to work, and to find himself murmuring "Margaret," when he should have been reconciling the intricacies of a wayward plot, was humiliating. As a man will do in this stage of disease, he struggled against it, and to avoid too much thought of Margaret, which had a way of assailing him as he sat at his desk and in the lonely watches of the night, he took to haunting cafés more assiduously than ever. That is, this was the reason he gave his conscience; but love is a sophist from birth, and mingling with the world often drove the image of Margaret from his thoughts, only to offer him the flesh and blood article to look at and adore.

One night he even went to the Opera, which in a sane mood he detested. It was at the Comique, and they were singing "La Tosca." He took a seat in a *loge au troisième*, because it was the only

thing he could get, and sat himself down in the second row, behind a male and a female back. There was a certain familiarity and a certain elegance, as he casually noted, about both these backs, which rather indicated that they were a little out of place up so high, and perhaps had gone there to avoid observation.

It was just as Tosca and her Mario were in the midst of their duet in the first act that Browne was conscious of being distracted from the music by a kind of buzzing that went on in his own head. There was a familiarity in that, too.

"My friend," said something that was not quite of himself nor quite of the external world, "*say what you have to say now, for after this act I must leave you.*"

"Leave me? It is the first time I have seen you for two weeks!"

"Nevertheless I must leave you. He needs me. He wishes me to be with him."

"He is selfish. He is a brute!"

"He needs me, my friend."

"So do I need you! I am going mad without you! I have not slept for two nights. If this goes on I shall kill myself."

The machinery in his head ceased and the puppets in front took up their part. They spoke low, as if never dreaming that they could be heard, and they spoke their lines without a break, just as their creator had known they would. Once begun, they never ceased talking, and the machinery in Browne's head never failed to round out each sentence the necessary number of minutes before a real voice uttered it. This time their conversation had enough of reminiscence in it to piece together the history of their lives and their relations.

The gentleman was a young poet, and had been the former secretary of the lady's husband, in which position he had been an outraged observer of the scorn, contempt and even cruelty with which she had been treated. The constant observation of her charms and of her distress had so preyed upon his mind and filled him with hopeless passion that he had sensibly resolved to kill himself; but the lady, discovering his purpose, had persuaded him to abandon it, not

on her account, but because of the old mother and unmarried sister in the country who depended on him. Incidentally, the lady seemed to have found new courage for living out her own dull existence.

But now, a year or two after this sensational first act, here they were at it again. The gentleman uttered reproaches unnumbered, and had still a great deal to say about suicide, and the lady soothed him with patient tenderness; and what with thinking out what they *were* to say, making sure that they *had* said it, listening to the insistent music and catching an occasional "Margaret" that would out of habit shoot through his head, Browne began to feel that he was going mad.

Before the curtain fell he had had quite enough of the occult and of the romantic, and he left the *loge*, as he had entered it, unnoticed.

IV

IN the foyer of the premier, as luck would have it, he encountered that other distracting influence, Miss Margaret Gardner and her mother. They were good enough to invite him into their box for the rest of the opera, and he accepted the peace it promised as a man recovering from a debauch takes a glass of cold water.

He was by now quite convinced of some occult connection between himself and the pair of lovers, whether as an influence upon them or as a passive medium of their turbulent feeling. The psychology of the matter no longer interested him, and the romance itself, truly French though it was, he found rather disquieting. He felt haunted by it, pursued, as if he were in some sense responsible.

Browne did not know it, but the contact with so much emotionalism had given him a wild, wandering look, the effect of which was helped out by the disarrangement his hair had undergone from being pushed back by a nervous hand. His general appearance had so much the effect of intoxication that, as a

matter of fact, the Gardners had hesitated to invite him into their box.

They were presently joined by Jackson, who immediately bent a critical eye on Browne.

"I say," he asked, "what is there to see up aloft? Why do you keep looking up at those *loges* in the third balcony?"

"Why," said Browne, hesitating and stammering fatuously, "that was where I was sitting during the first act. I wanted to see—"

"If the *loge* was still there?"

"Yes," agreed Browne, still looking upward to where the French lady was plainly to be seen, leaning her arms on the red velvet rail, oblivious of the world, conversing earnestly with the liquid-eyed young man. "You see, she said she was going home after the first act, and she's still there. I wonder what made her stay?"

Jackson, who sat next Browne, looked sternly and disapprovingly at his friend. "I'll see," he said quietly, "that you leave, yourself, after this act. Don't you know any better than to come around where ladies are when you're in such a condition?"

Browne rose haughtily, with the intention of seating himself away from Jackson on the other side of Miss Gardner, but he was brought back again by a violent kick on the shin, which disabled him for the moment and served to bring himself and his eccentric behavior into full public prominence.

"You're acting like a fool, Jackson," said Browne with dignity. "I'm as sober as you are."

Which remark being overheard by Miss Gardner, served of course only to convict poor Browne out of his own mouth. While Browne raged inwardly, Miss Gardner fell sad and silent and responded to the conversation he endeavored manfully to make with frigid "yeses" and "nos."

In the meantime Jackson, borrowing his aunt's opera glass, leveled it at the *loge* where Browne had been.

"I say," he exclaimed, quite forgetting to lower his voice, "that's the same pair of idiots you were watchin' that Sunday at Armenonville!"

Browne pretended not to hear him, and went on offering gratuitous brilliancy to Miss Gardner.

"Isn't it the same?" persisted Jackson.

"No," declared Browne.

"The chap's actin' awfully queer," went on Jackson—"feeling in his pockets for something."

Browne turned to look. His jaw dropped and a shiver went over him. "You don't suppose he's got that pistol with him, do you?" he asked.

There was silence in the box. Three pairs of accusing eyes were turned on him.

"You don't seem quite yourself, Mr. Browne," observed Mrs. Gardner's chilly accents.

"Perhaps you would prefer," added Miss Gardner, "to join your other friends."

"I'm sorry," said Browne, rising and with a simplicity and dignity that naturally under the circumstances went for nothing, "that I am unable to explain myself."

"You can explain later to me," declared Jackson grimly.

V

ABOUT half past one that same evening Browne raised his head from the couch on which he had thrown himself and faced the accusing face of Jackson.

"Slept it off any?" asked that gentleman accusingly.

Browne pulled himself together, got up and mentioned as a preface that there had been nothing whatever to sleep off. He would proceed to explain to Jackson what he could not very well explain before ladies. His explanation did indeed concern the two people who had—by accident—sat in the front of his *loge*, whom also he admitted to be the same he had been watching—and listening to—at Armenonville. It was altogether rather a curious affair. Browne hesitated a moment.

"Go on," urged Jackson.

"Well, it's an odd sort of thing to explain to a practical man like you. You

see, I know what they're going to say before they say it."

"You know what they're going to say before they say it!"

"Yes—first a conversation forms in my brain, and then the people repeat it."

"Do you know what everybody's going to say before they know it themselves?" Jackson was very American and quite ungrammatical.

"No, of course not. Just these two."

"And you follow 'em around spyin' on 'em?" Jackson's tone was half curious, half disgusted.

"Hang it, no! They follow *me* and I can't get rid of 'em! The lady's trying to break off with the man. He threatened tonight to blow his brains out. That's why I made that foolish remark about the pistol."

"Oh, that's it!"

"Yes, that's it."

Browne was beginning to feel quite easy and clear in his mind, now that he had explained his difficulty to Jackson and Jackson seemed to take it so reasonably. "Where are you going?"

Jackson had risen. "In case you should be able to read my thoughts before I utter them, I'm going to make it plain to my aunt and cousin that you're suffering from insanity, too much booze and an abnormal interest in shady French women."

"Jackson, you're a fool! Let me explain it again."

But his words fell on the air. The door had already closed behind the retreating form of Jackson.

Browne called on the Gardners next day. They were not at home. He wrote a note to Mrs. Gardner. It was returned unopened.

VI

ON thinking over his own conduct, however, it came as a surprise to himself that he found a good deal in it to condemn. Feeling his banishment from Margaret's society as the greatest misfortune that could have befallen him, he began to see that he had paltered in a very pitiful fashion with the emotions

that made that banishment hard to bear.

His feeling for her he recognized as no passing fancy, but as a genuine passion, such as he had never felt before, and with a lover's conviction of his own faithfulness could never feel again. It was not his fault, to be sure, that on the eve of his new experience he had been idling about looking for casual new impressions; nor had it altogether been weak to treat his love like a disease, and to test its strength by resisting it. But once having recognized the seriousness of the affair, his weakness had been to keep it in the realm of dreams, of equal rank with the creations of his imagination and with his idle interest in the romance of the French lady with the soulful eyes.

He had acted like a mere sentimentalist, not like a man. He should have dragged his dream into the open and made it give an account of itself in human terms. If he had been devoting himself, as he should have been doing, with all his soul and all his strength to capturing in honest fashion the woman whose image so possessed him, he never could have even seemed to make an ass of himself at the Opera, and would not now be wandering in outer darkness.

These were the thoughts produced by Mr. Browne one Sunday afternoon in the Bois a little before tea time. There were scarce twenty people on the green of the Pré Catalan. It seemed hardly possible and almost crude of fate so to arrange it, but one of these twenty, sitting alone at a table under a tree, was Margaret Gardner.

Browne's late uplifting thoughts gave him courage. He marched straight up to her table.

"May I sit down here and talk to you," he asked, "until I have persuaded you that you have been very unjust to me?"

Miss Gardner looked him straight in the eyes. How adorably honest she was, thought the infatuated Browne.

"I shall be very glad to be persuaded," she admitted; "but you must finish before my mother and cousin get

here from Longchamps. I'm afraid you won't find them so eager."

"First," began Browne, "did Jackson tell you anything of the interview he had with me that night after the opera?"

"Only in a general way."

"A general way?"

Miss Gardner turned very red, but she faced the situation bravely. "He said you were drunk," she said.

"I was not drunk," declared Browne. "Listen. Do you remember that morning I first met you at Armenonville—my telling you something about a case of thought transference?"

But Miss Gardner, strangely enough considering the interest she professed to feel in Browne's rehabilitation, did not seem to be listening. A puzzled and far-away look had come upon her face.

"What's the matter?" asked the anxious lover.

"Nothing," said Miss Gardner; and again as if to confirm herself: "Nothing. Go on—thought transference!"

Browne paused and sighed. She was so beautiful, so desirable, and so frightfully uninterested in him! As he went on with his story she was obviously looking beyond him, her eyes on whatever might be behind his back.

"I told you of it as a hypothetical case, but it was a real one."

The dreamy far-away look had come upon Miss Gardner's face again.

"I wonder," she murmured, "if he really means it? I wonder if he will?"

"Who means what?" cried Browne. "Who will what?"

Quite distracted, he looked about in the direction of Miss Gardner's eyes. There they were again—the enamored, hypnotic, accursed pair, the pleading youth and the lady with the romantic eyes.

"You've had it, too!" cried Browne, in joyful accusation. "They obeyed your thoughts! You heard them speak before they spoke!"

Miss Gardner looked as one who comes out of a trance, and nodded guiltily.

"He's talking about killing himself again! I know him—the cur! They're the same puppets. And you heard them, too!"

A light of sudden comprehension dawned on Miss Gardner's eyes. "Go on!" she cried feverishly. "Tell me all about it!"

Browne had risen to his feet. "Not here," he said fiercely. "We'll get a cab and take it to anywhere there is, and there I'll tell you."

It was somewhere else. They had tea before them, and they had even

drunk a little of it, but they didn't know exactly where they were or how to get to it again.

"And you heard them, too!" repeated Browne. There was no sense in what he said, but he thought there was.

"It's wonderful!" she said slowly. "It shows how much we are alike. It shows the sympathy there should always be between us. We even hear what doesn't exist, and hear it just alike!"



A BALLADE OF SCANT RHYMES

By ALONZO RICE

(OVE—as in LOVE. Above, love, shove, glove, dove.)

RHYMING, Ben Jonson says, is "propping verse
For fear of falling." Let the fact astound!
And some are good, indifferent, others worse;
All lines upon the sonnet's spindle wound;
Rhyme keeps the airy structure off the ground.
But tell me, bard, now seated high above,
Among the wealth of words have you not found
And felt the want of those that rhyme with "love"?

Then Alexander Pope, whose style is terse,
On certain practices has sternly frowned.
He cites one word that surely will coerce
Its mate to follow it in rhyming round.
Before the cadence dies away the sound
Proclaims its fellow! You that pencils shove,
Among the lists of words have you not found
And felt the want of those that rhyme with "love"?

What book of ready rhymes against this curse
Prevails the least? It seems the shackles bound
Not Hood nor Walker, though they do rehearse
"Grove," "prove," can loose! A double-headed hound
Guards well the gate; unless it is to pound!
Each knocks in vain or throws as gage his glove!
The words in Webster, Johnson! Yet is found
And felt the want of those that rhyme with "love"!

L'ENVOI

Bards, though you be on high Parnassus crowned
(To end this ballade, I have just a "dove"!)
Among your wealth of words have you not found
And felt the want of those that rhyme with "love"?

MONEY TALKS

By HARRY COWELL

MONEY talks. As talk is cheap, let's hear what it has to say for itself, what against.

Money talks—proverbially, even to epigrammatists; eloquently, even to orators; authoritatively, even to kings—talks, if well bred, *sotto voce*; if vulgar, at the top of its voice; but ever in a language more universal than love's own, in a way to be understood of all men save, it may be, some unheard-of savages or some undreamt-of saints; the deaf and dumb show it makes easily within the simplest comprehension.

Interminably, in drawing-room as well as mart, money talks, saying: "Behold, I am lord of human life!" and human life, bowing, believes, nor dares to say it nay. Its, in love's limited monarchy, is the power of prime minister, the power behind the throne.

Money talks, and the world in its orbit pauses, all ears. No wonder. It talks in tones more unctuous than those of Suadela's self; has a way with it more irresistible than ever had Father O'Flynn. Its speech is what silence is said to be. More golden-throated than Caruso, it pursues the even tenor of its way as one who has it. Its victorious tongue is your proper Esperanto, your living Volapuk studied with what diligence needs not be stated.

Great a talker as is money, it talks but little to the poor, being too busy to say more to them than "Howdo! Good-bye," in a breath. Thus, at least, cynics say of it.

Talking of cynics, what a cynic is money itself! What offhand clever, unkind things has it been known to say behind a man's back, dubbing one bribe giver and another bribe taker! The diary

of an observant well traveled dollar—what reading! How earned; how spent! Passing from what palm to what palm!

How entertaining soever the individual dollar, writing objectively, might be, money, talking vaingloriously of itself, is the most insufferable of egotists—and that on a planet where all is vanity! "See," it screams, to arrest the attention of the passer-by. "I live in a palace, wear purple; therefore am I a king!" Or else in lower tones: "The beauty wherewith I surround myself proves me cultured!" But, let it talk never so loud or with never such fine art, by no manner of means can it deceive the least penetrating of lackies, much less win golden opinions of the discerning. Or again: "Look how charitable I am!" it seems to boast—in truth, begging this alms of you: "I pray you think more charitably of me." In the matter of alms giving, money talks very rarely, most sweetly when unheard. How loquaciously ill, as a rule, doth it wag its precious tongue, unwisely giving itself away!

Money in very deed works wonders; yet is the miraculous cure of hopeless vulgarity wrought by no such quack. Quack, that's the word. Money is the arch fakir, the most incorrigible of self-advertisers. Perforce it talks, making open confession, nor does any soul good. Poverty may be secret; wealth is inevitable revelation. Louder yet than its words speak money's deeds—which is saying a good deal.

Money talks and lays down the law, the while Solons with many a genuflection attend.

Money talks, and thereto doing obeisance bow sun, moon and stars.

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Money talks, and 'tis the spoken to that grow Midas-eared.

Money talks, and be it never so tainted, the world and his wife are nothing loth to swallow every word it uttereth. Filthy lucre called, yet will the daintiest wallow therein rather than take a bath of the multitude.

Not without reason. Liars and the dead have no use for money; but they that live and lie not, admittedly much. Popular superstition despite, the poet has an enormous appetite and starves under protest. While talent starves, the jingle talents make is accepted as poetry by the most difficult of editors, let alone the uncritical public at large.

What a radical is the root of all evil! What top heavy branches of learning doth it uphold! Witness Stanford, Chicago and the rest. Money is the arch anarchy; 'tis the absence of necessity that knows no law. ↓

A revolutionist is a successful rebel. Money is the most successful of rebels. Man, mercenary animal that he is, tends to look at life from the point of view of his pocket. Thus a windfall is a more effective cure for Socialism than all the un-Christian dismal science in the world. The *argumentum ad crumenam* is the most forceful known to logic. In justifying the competitive system, nothing succeeds like success. At heart the average workingman is a millionaire; that is to say, the average workingman is a millionaire in a state of arrested development. Naturally enough, he resents his arrest, loudly protesting against its injustice. Wealthy beyond the dreams of equitable division, the once rabid advocate of commonwealth shelves his Shakespeare and takes down his Emerson, and forthwith the jewel consistency becomes the hobgoblin of little minds. The good Republican votes the straight ticket for the principle of the thing—yclept the full dinner pail; and the no less good Democrat marches to the polls impelled by a like disinterested motive.

A popular corruption of justice tempered by mercy is justice tampered with by money. Practically, it is easier to hang a jury than a murderer. Unless

you be by divine grace specially incredulous, so silver-tongued is money that it will talk you into believing, despite the evidence of your senses, that black is white. 'Tis *par excellence* the devil's advocate. Prince of sophists and sophisticator of princes, to question the justice of its remarks requires, it seems, more than ordinary human hardihood. To its *open sesame* responds every known door, save that which Peter guards. Serve Mammon to some purpose, and have the entree not only to the house of God made with hands, the halls of legislation, but also to the most difficultly squared circle imaginable.

Yet how incredibly little one can buy with "merely money" many a rich man learns to his cost. Gold seems to be happiness in its handiest, most condensed form; but like laboratory made food tablets, scientifically proportioned, theoretically perfect, it leaves the hunger of the heart unappeased. To all appearances, a five-hundred-dollar bill is a wishing rug in miniature; a goldpiece a veritable bit of Aladdin's lamp. The fates, however, are unbribeable; the destinies adder deaf to the voice of the charmer.

The rich matter-of-fact man has Rome in his pocket—at the bank, rather. Much good it does him. The chances are he lets it lie there unseen, nor ever dreams of taking it out—dimly conscious perhaps that take it out he verily cannot. Unless a man have eyes in his head to see it when taken out, he has not in truth Rome in his pocket, at the bank nor in the safety deposit vaults. He but *seems* to have. Do Rome he can; see it, he cannot. You may lead an ass to the well springs of knowledge, but you cannot make him think. Overmuch given to matters of fancy, the poor artist dies without seeing Rome—save only in dreams. What of it? There are many worse ways of sight seeing, and few better.

Money is a wishing rug made of wild ass's skin. With every wish gratified, it more or less perceptibly shrinks. When the wish to see the wishing rug grow absorbs all other wishes, the envied possessor is the least enviable of

mortals, namely, a miser. The wishing rug mysteriously enlarges. Meanwhile the wishes lessen.

Nothing in the world is more fatuously easy than to pay too much for money—too much time, thought, energy, health and the like, not to say tone, truth, equity, friendship and so forth. Put in a businesslike manner, the vital question ever is: Which will buy more of the uncheatable marketmen, the immensities, a hundred dollars plus so much time, thought, energy, health, and the rest, or a thousand dollars minus so much? The purchasing power of a dollar varies most in ways uncharted of the dismal science. Who has not seen ten men dine better for one dollar than one man for ten dollars has not lived both in and out of Bohemia. How much money minus can buy as much as how much money plus? The question is more difficultly old than Ann. Every man must make his own compromise. To live is to make some compromise—that is, if a man be fine. To refuse absolutely to make any compromise, to pay none of the dream for the dollar, is to decline life upon the only terms the fates at present offer. To commit suicide upon recognizing the nature of the terms is a scarcely ideal way out of the difficulty, life. The God of Things As They Are make the saying less hard!

Money talks in parables. The universality of its tongue is misleading. For all its use of the vernacular, the heart of what it says is deep hidden in mystery. Who accepts its promises to pay at their face value is a sorry business man, an involuntary bankrupt. Having once learned only to discount them, a man passes from the business to the fine art of life. The true artist may come to refuse much cash in hand for a thing no more tangible than a mood. He who knows to a nicety what his money costs him is a master of self-analysis; and the finer man he is, the more fully is he aware of the fact that to get enough money for his needs, however simple, without paying too much for it, is hard. Health a man may pay for money, and with the money

thus dearly bought buy health back, and leave a surplus; but if for money he pay what, roughly speaking, we term his peace of mind or the possibility of being a greater self, the chances are infinity to one that, despite much founding of school, hospital, library and no end of shriving, the ledger of his life will show a sad deficit.

But it ill becomes money to moralize. Let the empty purse open its mouth to give vent to a homily. Besides money's, what other tongue but laughter's have men time to listen to? To both of these will they busy listen, though they understand neither.

Money talks, and life listens as it listens not to the tongues of men or of angels. But when money, the means of life, becomes the end, the end to all intents and purposes it is. Then does the man of means, king of a vasty realm, abdicate in favor of the slave, the man of one end, a realm of unideal gold such as no Keats wanders in, no poet sings. "Money," to quote from my favorite author, "is a good means but a bad end." The end of many a man is money. None is so poor as he that is possessed of his possessions; none so contemptible as he that abjectly serves his servant. Money is an old servant of man's, forever forgetting its place, and going unrebuked.

Nothing is more common than to hear man boast of his money. Is it his? Rather, he is its. It is a thing of authority. It saith to one man, "Go," and he goeth; to another, "Come," and he cometh; and to its servant, "Do this," and this he doeth. At its word, man jumps out of his sickbed, jostles his bosom friend, breaks an appointment with love, lets music come and go unheard, beauty unseen. Lest money should talk to him like the jealous mistress it is, he foregoes the green of the earth, the blue of the sky, flowers and the songs of birds. The voice of his old playmate the river calls to him in vain; the mother tongue of wind and wave is no longer even a memory; the meaning of pleasure is lost to him. All this for money's sake. Poor braggart! His money it? Its man he!

THE CAPTIVE

By EMERY POTTLE

THE feet of them that bear away my day
Wait at the valley door;
Afar I hear night's sullen sea and gray
Chafe on the world's wan shore.

Beside a pool of jade and pearl she kneels—
My golden heart of light;
A shadowed wing across the surface steals,
As if a soul took flight.

I know that when this last frail hour be spent,
They claim their prisoner;
The lonely winds, from pitying hills unpent,
Will search and sigh for her.

I know that some belated gentle bird
Within the hedge will call;
The valley silence mourn in grief unheard,
In tears that never fall.

The feet of them that bear away my day
Wait at the valley door;
Afar I hear night's sullen sea and gray
Chafe on the world's lone shore.



THE average woman who thinks she would be happy if she had a vote is the same
one who used to think she would be happy if she had a husband.

MEETING

By W. H. KOHL

FOR eight years Hastings had lived at Regnard's, in the little room overlooking Twenty-eighth Street. For eight summers he had come from his studio only to spend the evening at his window, watching the traffic in the street below; for eight winters he had passed the evenings with books, borrowed, for economy's sake, from a public library.

He had worked hard, had saved carefully, had planned incessantly; for eight years he had waited eagerly for the day that had now come.

At daybreak he rose, donned his best clothes and went below to breakfast. At the early hour he could avoid the regular boarders, who knew him well enough to ask why he appeared in holiday attire on a working day.

After breakfast he returned to his room and began to pack his clothes and books and pictures in his trunks. Though it was a day of happiness, he was touched with regret at leaving forever the lodging so intimately associated with eight years of his life; and when he came to take his belongings from their familiar nooks and corners, he felt as if he were despoiling a helpless old friend. In a moment of caprice, he determined to leave undisturbed upon the bureau a decorative calendar he had placed there on the first day he entered the room.

When he had finished packing, he dared not glance a second time at the desolate walls, but hurried into the street.

Once outside, his light-heartedness returned. The day was serene and warm for April, and all New York that had

been shut within doors while winter lingered now came into the genial sunshine. The chirping sparrows fluttered from roof to street and back again; the children swarmed from the tenements and ran screaming, chattering on the pavements; the shopkeepers displayed their wares in the open air; from around the corner came the notes of a street piano.

Hastings found a public telephone, and, getting his number, he asked, for the tenth time in two days:

"Do you know when the *Campania* will be in?"

His heart gave a bound when he heard the answer:

"Expected at the pier about noon."

Though it was but eight o'clock, his first thought was to go at once to the dock; but, recalling that he had not, notified Madame Regnard of his removal, he retraced his steps to the house.

The woman was in the dining room dusting crumbs from the tables. She looked up in surprise, saying:

"Somebody must be going somewhere, all dressed so fine at this time of day."

Hastings replied bluntly:

"I shall not want the room any longer. I am leaving this morning."

The woman's eyes widened, and she asked in rapid succession:

"Leaving? Why, isn't the room satisfactory? Don't you like the cooking? Why didn't you complain before?"

Hastings replied quickly to all these queries:

"There's been nothing to complain about. The fact is I'm going away to be married today."

Madame Regnard dropped the dust-

ing brush she had in her hand. Then she said in an incredulous tone:

"Tell me frankly if you don't like the accommodations. It isn't necessary to invent any stories."

He burst into a laugh. "It's the truth, all right."

The woman regarded the speaker fixedly, and then said, smiling kindly:

"I believe you—certainly I do. But, naturally, it's a surprise to me."

"Why?" Then, before the woman could reply, Hastings said again: "It is because I've lived here so quietly for eight years. You thought I cared nothing for women."

He was in gay spirits, and he wanted to tell somebody, even the canny, avaricious Frenchwoman, how happy the whole world seemed to him; but suddenly his usual reticence possessed him, and he said, only to satisfy the woman's curiosity:

"I have been engaged a long while. Nine years ago I met my friend in Paris, where I was studying art. She was a student also, an English girl. She is coming in on the *Campania* today, and before evening we shall be married."

Glad that the difficulty of notification was over, he departed with light heart and step, and went at once to the Cunard dock. But as it was still early, instead of entering the building, he continued along the river front until he reached an open pier extending far out, where he could watch for the first distant view of the incoming liner.

How happy he was! How joyous life seemed at that time! He felt a strong, sensuous pleasure in the day with its blue sky and clear atmosphere. The whole panorama of nature took on an ideal aspect that he had never noticed before; the sunshine that enchanted the day had warmed him to his very soul; nothing was real, nothing was prosaic, nothing unpleasant.

His eye followed the irregular line of the Jersey hills, which, in the transparent air, showed each minute house and rock distinctly; then he watched a tug struggling, plunging against the tide, towing an immense freighter by a long line that bowed from its own weight

until it dipped into the water. Across the river, back and forth, went the ferryboats with their flat cabins like huge beetles, with their paddles scratching the water like enormous claws. Over at the Hoboken docks a liner was slowly backing into midstream, her droning siren reaching him seconds after the steam was visible. Against her rails were a thousand waving white specks; at intervals the breeze carried the music of the band across the stream.

There was much about the day and the scene that reminded Hastings of his departure from Havre nine years before. He had refused to part with Fanny at Paris, and she had accompanied him to Havre, not leaving him until ordered ashore from the steamer. For a moment after she had gone down the gangplank he had lost sight of her, and his heart beat rapidly with a fear that he might not be able to distinguish her in the crowd on the pier. But there she was, her smiling lips uplifted toward him.

And then, when the boat began to glide away, he waved his handkerchief frantically. What would he not have sacrificed for another kiss? But nothing would retard the steamer now—he was going steadily, steadily away from her! He kept his eyes fastened on her, but she soon became mingled in the assemblage. But he knew she was there somewhere near the end of the pier—the woman he loved madly, desperately.

He had watched the receding line of France until it was but a hazy form along the horizon; then he walked aimlessly around the deck, his thoughts lost in miserable reverie. What if she should not remain faithful to him? He was parting from her for an indefinite period, and what was possible in such a separation was infinite. She was pretty, very pretty, and all the men followed her with admiring eyes. Then, those coquettish shrugs of her shoulders, those sidewise glances, those thousand and one seductive movements that had impassioned him—would others fail to be attracted? God! What bitterness he had lived through on that voyage back to New York!

Then he fell to thinking of the time when she had come into his life.

One night, while in a café with a friend, he had noticed a young woman seated at an adjacent table with two men. He noted that she was extremely pretty, and his glance kept wandering back to her. She had intensely black eyes, a wealth of black hair which contrasted noticeably against her white hat; and her bust of splendid contour tapered up from her waist like an unfolding flower. He had asked his friend:

"The girl in white—do you know her?"

His companion returned:

"Slightly. Her name is Fanny Jessop, an English girl with black hair—Irish mother, I suppose. Very stunning girl, but—"

"But what?" he had urged.

"A trifle too attractive—has too many admirers, one for each day. Just at present the big blond fellow on her left is in high favor."

How he had hated the big blond fellow chatting there so familiarly with her! What kind of taste had she? he asked himself.

Once he caught her glance, and he felt the fire of her black eyes. She noticed that he was watching her, and she began to pose for his benefit.

A few evenings later he saw her at the café again, this time with another escort, a big, handsome Englishman, who had a tantalizing fashion of holding her hand while pretending to examine a ring she wore. He found himself growing jealous of this admirer, for in some vague manner he felt that he had known the girl long ago, and too well for interlopers to come between him and her.

Then, one morning, while sauntering aimlessly about, he had turned from the Place de la Concorde into the Champs Élysées. At the early hour the charming driveway was almost deserted, and in the entire length to the Arc de Triomphe there were not more than a half-dozen carriages, while the pathways were quite empty. He had strolled but a short distance, when he was conscious that somebody was following him.

It was the black-haired English girl.

A resistless smile came to his lips at first, then a slight glow of color. He raised his hat and made some commonplace remark, absurdly flustered. After that they walked and walked, and he wished that their stroll might never come to an end.

For six months he was very happy, and every day he was with Fanny. He neglected his studies; he avoided his acquaintances; he disregarded his obligations. He liked to make little excursions with her to the shops, and every incident of those experiences remained a cherished memory. There was something delicate, delicious in hovering about her in this intimate manner, helping her in her feminine occupations. One day he recalled in particular; he had gone with her to have her gloves fitted, and he had leaned on the plush cushion beside her, his eyes following each of her graceful gestures. He had not seen her more fascinating; he had not known a happier hour. The delicate perfume of the shop, the elegance of its furnishings, the surroundings of fashion and refinement, intoxicated him. That day she had given her promise of marriage.

From then he realized that he must return to New York, that he must work hard to provide for the future which marriage involved. He set a time to leave Paris, delayed the date, set it again and delayed as before. But finally he engaged passage, and was to sail definitely in two weeks. Then he saw the fourteen happy days slip away; he was with Fanny roaming the parks, sauntering in the boulevards, most of the time.

Once back in New York, he had gone eagerly to work.

Then came the years of indecision, with Fanny always about to come to America. At one letter his hopes rose; at the next his despair overwhelmed him. When he had saved sufficient money to accord with his plans, he expected her to join him.

But for one reason or another she delayed, and he began to have misgivings. His love, fatal, irresistible, threw him into mental suffering, that was relieved

only by writing freely to her. She replied:

Have no fears for me. But how about you? There are times when I suffer greatly in considering certain possibilities: would you continue to love me if I were changed, if I were no longer pretty? It is possible for a woman, any woman, to lose her charms with the passage of time. What effect would such an alteration have upon you?

But it is horrible to see oneself changing from day to day, to see lines deepening in the face, eyes becoming dull, the hair turning gray, the limbs shrinking, the hands falling to bones. To a woman this means everything, for, as you too truly put it, pretty looks are her capital.

To that letter he had immediately replied. He was touched with Fanny's sentiment; he wondered if anything he had written before had caused her to doubt his sincerity, his love. He poured his feelings into the letter; he vowed over and over again that nothing, absolutely nothing, could make her any the less his soul's delight. He wrote page after page, and sent them away with a smile of relief.

But gradually he was overcome with a disturbing thought. Was he as strong as he boasted? Was he the rock of constancy that he momentarily declared himself? Would he be able to fulfill all the unending pledges he had made? He reassured himself somewhat with the consideration of his years of waiting, and turned again to the letter, which ended so abruptly that he turned it over and over, expecting to find a postscript somewhere.

Was it possible that Fanny had become the kind of woman he detested? He had loved her vanity, her need of petting, her desire for admiration. His wife must come to the dining table in an enticing gown; she must contrive some new seductive touch each day; she must be always pretty. Perhaps he might some day change, but he doubted if ugliness in another could ever fail to repel him; ugliness in woman, where beauty could reach the supreme expression, was incompatible with his idea of complete happiness in love. His wife must be one that all his friends would turn to look at and remark: "Hastings is a lucky dog!"

Often he had seen some other woman

who reminded him of her—a glimpse of a fair face, a curving neck nestled in a bit of ruche like that she wore, a bit of curling hair peeping out from under a pretty hat, a certain kind of tapering arm. In a manner he had loved all these women of her type, and once in the street he had encountered a woman so startlingly like her that he was forced to follow her for block after block. And then would come a term of intense loneliness, of a gnawing desire to listen to her voice, to kiss her lips.

So absorbed was he in the recollections of the past, so lost in the present, that he no longer discerned the objects before him; he forgot that he was out there at the end of the pier.

Then suddenly he jumped to his feet; in midstream, seemingly coaxed along by three tugs, was the Cunarder with her orange funnels.

He bounded along the pier back to the entrance of the wharf and found his way to the upper floor. The innermost end of the long dock was choked with people anxiously seeking entrance past a rope stretched from wall to wall. One at a time, after answering some perfunctory questions, the crowd was allowed to enter. After a tedious wait, Hastings passed the officials on guard.

Quickly joining the throng gathered around an open door through which the gangplank was to be lowered, he began another wait that seemed indefinite.

Suddenly the whole dock gave a tremor and everybody moved nervously, happily, for the boat had touched the pier. Then one after another of the squares of sunshine on the floor vanished as the huge vessel slipped past each succeeding window of the wharf. There was a creaking of ropes, another tremor of the building and the *Campania* was at rest.

Presently the passengers began to descend the gangplank.

Standing on his tiptoes, Hastings scanned the faces of the women, but he could not discover Fanny.

And when the line of passengers thinned toward the last of the arrivals, his heart was beating rapidly with dis-

appointment. By some stupidity he had missed her; he had let her pass by him in the crowd.

Convinced that the passengers had all disembarked, he started to thread his way through the crowd.

Then he felt a soft tap on his shoulder, and almost at his ear he heard the familiar voice of Fanny calling:

"Dick! Dick!"

He turned sharply. She was there, almost touching him!

But it was a mere shadow of that Fanny he had left at Havre! The brilliancy of the eyes was gone; the rounded cheeks were sunken; her splendid figure had shriveled away to a gaunt semblance of its former self. With startled countenance, involuntarily, he shrank back a step.

And then, before he could suppress the words he would have given his soul to recall, he stammered:

"Why—why, Fanny!"

There was no ring of joy, no warmth of greeting in his tone—only vivid surprise. He had let his whole story slip away, and she had understood all too clearly.

Quickly withdrawing her hand from his, she repeated:

"I should have known, Dick; I should have known."

For an instant he peered into her eyes, and then he quailed before the steady, passionless gaze she returned.

"You should have known—known what?" he faltered.

"That it was a mistake to come."

That was all she said, but he read more than that in the tremor she endeavored to disguise by a forced shrug of the shoulders:

"I should have known, Dick. I trusted too well—too well—the faith that brought me to you. I should have known that all you cared for in me was but transitory—my pretty face and figure, the flowing hair, the sweeping curves of youth. You thought you loved me—me! And when I told you in my letters I had changed—changed woefully, you seemed to answer that you still awaited me with loving heart. Oh, the pity of it, Dick! My soul was

all I could bring to you, and it was—was not that you cherished."

He commenced to talk incoherently. He knew not what he said, nor what Fanny answered. He was speaking only to cover his chagrin. Then, seizing the opportunity of something to relieve the tension of his mind, he began to search for Fanny's trunk. All about them were clusters of friends and relatives happy in reunion; the baggage from the steamer was being deposited here and there; the custom officers were rummaging in the belongings of the newcomers. While the inspector examined the contents of Fanny's trunk, Hastings continued his unnatural gaiety. And when he handed the key back to her, he rattled on:

"Now that's over with. We'll get a cab at once and go to the hotel. And after that—well, we'll go to the parish house. I have everything arranged—the minister, some friends, a little supper. You're not too tired for a supper, no?"

But she gave no reply as she followed him to the staircase. She said nothing until they were halfway down the steps. Then she began:

"You were not glad, Dick—"

He interrupted fervently:

"Glad, glad? Why, of course I was glad!"

"But you haven't even kissed me."

With a quick movement, as though to try to reach her lips with his, he exclaimed:

"Surely I must have—"

But she repulsed him. "Not now, Dick."

A moment later they had reached the street door, and Hastings was about to hail a cab, when he remembered that in his excitement he had neglected to provide for the delivery of Fanny's trunk.

"Please stay here a moment," he said, "while I run upstairs to see about it. There is no use of your climbing the stairs; I'll be gone but a moment."

At her nod he darted away, transacted the necessary business and was returning to the street before five minutes had elapsed. Down the stairs he ran, two at a time, and with his hand

already extended to assist Fanny, he turned the corner of the doorway to the spot where he had left her standing. She was not there!

For a second he could not think; he had no power to move.

Then, as an appalling catastrophe first deadens the senses before it gradually revives them to full comprehension, he came out of his stupor to the agonizing truth.

He went up and down the street, looked into every corner, inquired of every bystander. One man had seen her, the woman with the brown hat.

"Yes, the one with the small hand-bag. Yes, that's the one," he repeated breathlessly. But the man could not recall in what direction she had gone.

Dodging this way and that among the trucks and wagons of the crowded river front, he hurried across to the opposite sidewalk. Then, thinking that she might have wandered off and would return to the doorway, he came back again and again, only to be disappointed.

It was not until dark that he left the vicinity of the pier. At once he notified the police, and all night he waited, waited for some message. The following morning he inquired at the office of the British consul. As a last resort, he placed an advertisement in the papers, and haunted the desks where the answers were given out.

But he gave up at the end of the week. The days and nights that followed were like those that have witnessed the closed grave.

And out of the great infinity of space

that was to keep them forever apart, he fancied he could hear a voice saying:

"I thought you were different, Dick, but you were like the others. You love us when we are young; you pledge upon your soul that you will be faithful always—always. Passionately you worship us while our cheeks are red, our bosoms firm, our figures graceful. But we are wise, we women who know the blight of age; we—we learn the price of adoration, the hour of happiness. For, once we begin to wither, we are neglected, forsaken. Already, even while we are yet in the tears of the first awakening, you are on your knees, swearing by all that is eternal that you will love unflinchingly the woman who offers, all too cheaply, youthful radiance for man's playtime. Ah, Dick, there is something better than that—a deeper love. If things had been changed; if—if it had been I that awaited you—"

Late one evening when the day's routine was over, Madame Regnard stopped a moment on her way upstairs to her room, to give the final orders to the servant. She said:

"See that Mr. Hastings has clean towels, and be sure his water pitcher is filled."

The servant answered in an astonished tone: "Why, I thought you said that Mr. Hastings had left us to be married!"

"We are not to gossip about the boarders," Madame Regnard replied sharply.

The servant went away mumbling.

"Those artists are a crazy lot, anyhow."



THE difference between a "henpeck" and a masterful husband is that one gives in at once while the other does it the next day.



IN the pursuit of folly we acquire much wisdom.

THE UNWELCOME VISITOR

By THOMAS L. MASSON.

"NOW what do you think has happened today?"

If Mrs. Spinnerton's face could have been analyzed—taken apart and separated into its various emotions—one would have found there a certain measure of anxiety, of chagrin, of mortification and, withal, of amusement.

Spinnerton had just come in from the office, and was patiently waiting for his dinner.

"I can't imagine," he replied. "Hope it is something good."

"It's simply awful."

Mrs. Spinnerton was a young and very pretty woman. Her strong point was her domesticity. She was known as a model housekeeper.

Spinnerton himself rather enjoyed her reputation in this respect. He often spoke of his wife's beauty and her devotion to her duties with an air of proprietorship that was even patronizing.

He was the kind of man who never permitted the good time he had himself on the quiet to interfere with his respect for his wife. Besides, he conducted himself outwardly in such a circumspect manner that she had always looked up to him.

They "got along," as the phrase is, admirably together.

"Well," said Spinnerton, "what was it?"

"Mr. Maltby called on us this afternoon."

"Mr. Maltby—what, the old fellow?"

"Yes."

"He didn't call on *us*, I guess. He knew *I* wasn't in. What did he want? To get some points on gardening, I'll bet."

Mrs. Spinnerton smiled confidentially. She drew nearer to her husband.

"Now you mustn't breathe a word of this," she said, "but what do you suppose that old fellow did?"

Mr. Maltby was a wealthy old gentleman who lived not far away. He lived a good deal by himself. But occasionally he had made it a point to drop in on a friendly visit.

"How do I know," replied Spinnerton, "what he did, unless you tell me?" He was a trifle impatient.

His wife, her face flushed—for she was modesty itself—leaned over him.

"My dear," she whispered, "you may not believe it, but that old fellow actually tried to—flirt with me!"

Spinnerton's face grew broad with the pleasure of the idea. It struck him as being so ridiculous that he sat up and smiled.

"It can't be possible!" he exclaimed. "Why, what did he do?"

"I thought I should die! He tried to hold my hand. We were sitting here, screened by the vines, just as you and I are now. Why, I never had the remotest thought of such a thing! Just imagine! And I happened to remark—just to make talk—that I was afraid I was growing too stout; and—well, do you know, he took me right up. 'Stout!' said he. 'Not a bit of it. You're just right.' And with that he actually put his arms around my waist and tried to lift me up. Really, I never felt so utterly embarrassed in my life. It was a terrible ordeal, I can tell you. Just think of it! I thought I *never* would get rid of him."

While she had been talking Spinner-

ton had been leaning back in his chair, his face expressing all of the various emotions of a man who was intensely interested and amused. When she finished, he burst out laughing.

"Well," he exclaimed, "that is the greatest thing that I ever heard. That old duffer! Why, he's old enough to be your father. Did you ever? But it's always the way with those old codgers. Always after a young and pretty woman. Ha!"

"I like that!" exclaimed Mrs. Spinnerton, her eyes almost filling with tears. "At least, you might sympathize with me. And especially after I have been through such a horrible experience. You have no idea," she went on, "what a dreadful thing it was. Why, I felt as though I could sink through the floor. I tried to laugh it off. But I saw it was no use. I tried to excuse myself. But he actually followed me into the dining room. At last he went, and I can tell you, I never felt so relieved in my life."

Spinnerton at this went off into a fresh gale of laughter. It took him some time to recover. When he did, he saw his wife's tearful face turned toward his.

"Can't help it," he exclaimed. "Funniest thing I ever heard. Just to think! Ha, ha! You never can tell, can you?"

"I thought you might not like it. I was afraid when I told you that you might get mad—that you might be jealous!"

"Me jealous! Of him? Of that old duffer—old enough to be my father! Ha!"

Once more Spinnerton let loose.

"This is too much!" he cried.

Then he turned.

"Why didn't you encourage him?" he asked. "Poor old chap! He needs a little love. Why be so cruel? Ha!"

"I think you are horrid. You don't seem to realize at all what it meant to me."

Spinnerton patted her on the back, as the dinner was announced.

"Never mind, little one," he said, with a kind of fatherly pride. "Think

of the happiness you have given to a lonely life."

"Don't! And promise that you won't say anything about it. It would just kill me if you did."

"Of course, I won't. Your secret is safe."

Mrs. Spinnerton looked at him, much troubled.

"Please, *please* don't joke about this any more," she said. "I don't know what I shall do if he comes again."

For days thereafter, whenever Spinnerton thought of the visit of Mr. Maltby, he smiled unconsciously to himself. One day, in a moment of confidence, he spoke about it to his intimate friend Moberly. There was a certain touch of pride in his recital—pride in his own proprietorship of his wife and a certain amused sympathy for old Maltby.

Moberly listened.

"He was over at your house yesterday," he said. "I happened to go by in my car, and saw him sitting there with your wife. By Jove, old man," he laughed, "really, you ought to protect her. It's a shame!"

"Isn't it?" echoed Spinnerton.

That evening when he got home he said:

"By the way, my dear, you didn't tell me about old Maltby being over here again. I heard he was here yesterday. How did you get rid of him? Why didn't you tell me?"

"What was the use of telling *you*?" replied Mrs. Spinnerton scornfully. "*You* wouldn't do anything about it. Not you! If he were a young and handsome man, why, then it would be different. You would be wanting to fight him at the drop of a hat. But just because it strikes you as highly amusing that an old man like that should come around here and mortify me to death, you don't think it is worth while."

"But what do you want me to do? I can't hang around here all day and order him off the premises."

"Oh, dear, no!" exclaimed Mrs. Spinnerton. "Now don't say anything about it, will you? I'll get rid of him

somehow, don't worry. Next time he calls I simply *won't* see him. Please don't do anything about it, will you?"

Spinnerton drew himself up dramatically.

"Villain!" he exclaimed. "For your sweet sake I will be calm."

He drew an imaginary sword.

"But if he crosses me path, I'll run him through like the base dog that he is! Let him bewa-a-re!"

Mrs. Spinnerton did not reply. She was too deeply concerned to speak.

It was about two weeks after this that one afternoon Moberly came into Spinnerton's office and placed his hand on Spinnerton's shoulder.

"Ready to go home, old chap?" he said.

"Yes. Just about to close my desk."

"I'll run along with you."

"All right. Glad to have you."

As they neared Spinnerton's house, Moberly turned to him again.

"Old chap," he said, "I thought I'd better come home with you today. Brace up, old fellow!"

He put his arm around Spinnerton to steady him as they went up the piazza steps.

"What's wrong?" said Spinnerton, looking at his friend.

"It's only your wife. She's gone—with Maltby."

"With Maltby!"

"Yes. They went off together on the train this morning. Everybody knew about it. It was common talk. He's

been over on your piazza every day now for weeks. Why, you knew about it yourself. But, of course—"

Inside the house—now vacant—Spinnerton, listening almost blindly to his friend, saw an envelope on the hall table. It had his name on it. It was addressed to him in his wife's hand. He tore it open. It read:

DEAR:

I'm sorry, but I know it is all for the best. If you had not made fun of me in the first place, this never would have happened. But I am glad that you did, for now I know what it means to be truly loved for myself alone, and not because I am a good housekeeper. You will find everything in good order. Good-bye!

MABELLE.

Spinnerton, dazed by the suddenness of his overwhelming calamity, nervously twitched the paper in his hand until it fluttered to the floor. He looked at Moberly, tried to utter something, failed and then tried again.

"Well, I'll be damned!" he muttered hoarsely at last. "What do you think of it?"

"Why, my dear man," replied Moberly, "this is exactly what you might have expected. When you are so sure that a woman won't do a certain thing that you even ridicule her about it, then you may be equally sure that she will go off and do it. Besides—"

He stooped and picked up the letter, while he smiled grimly, for he didn't approve of all of the things that he knew Spinnerton had done in the past. "This is evidently a love match."



TO THE LOVES

By ARTHUR BREWSTER CARTER

I DRINK not to my first love—though sweet, she's far from me;
Nor drink I to my last love—I know not who she'll be;
But deep I drink to you, love—the only girl I see.



THE only secret a woman keeps is the one she should tell.

I AM AMUSED

By ALLYS DE BOUTEVILLE

I DON'T know why I should write tonight, but that unreasonable little something inside is telling me to do it, and oh, I do want to. I have felt excited all day, wildly, breathlessly, but now especially, and why? Because—oh, because I hope it is true that I have a power over people. I must! The very idea intoxicates me. I lose all sense of perspective; everything in life is distorted because I want to be able to hold out my hand and have people clutch at it desperately; to draw it away and laugh. A light laugh that will stab one's heart and make it bleed. Then I can smile a lazy, childish smile, and the wound will be healed but not forgotten. And I must have men to play with. No, no, not intentionally cruel—I can't hurt anything with these hands. Have you seen them? Ah, take a long look. They are smooth and cold and white, and the pointed fingers are made to caress, not to choke, but somehow I think there are people who will shudder at the sight of them and the adoration that other men will lavish on my "beautiful white hands."

Oh, I shall play. Watch! Give me your heart. Yes, you! Why? Because I must have payment. For what? For looking at my eyes. Yes look, look, look; they are gazing at you and you are thirsty, and your soul is parched. Drink deeply. Look; they are soft and brown and clear and trustful and you cannot stop. Why should you? Only your heart. I am pleading; my hands are outstretched. I am tired; my lips tremble; it is mine—your heart. I hold it closely against my cheek. You watch breathlessly. I stroke it softly. You are happy! I kiss it, and you fall on your knees; your voice breaks; you stretch out your arms; you love me!

The heart slips from my slender fingers. It shivers and splinters on the ground. You catch at my hands with a groan. Your face is smothered in my gown, soft, clinging, enveloping. I disengage your fingers, the horror in your eyes turns to fear, and slowly stretching out both hands, I smile.

It is over. I have been amused.



THERE wouldn't be many women going to church if it weren't for the habit of wearing our best clothes on Sunday.

THE DAWNING

By C. EUDORA SULLIVANT

AS the door closed behind the last guest and Travers threw himself into a chair before the fire, Bennett, with a yawn, sauntered to the sideboard, poured himself a drink, and raising his glass, remarked over his shoulder, "To the coming dramatist!"

"For the Lord's sake, Ben, cut it out! I am so infernally tired of the whole play. I feel like wringing the neck of the next person who congratulates me."

Bennett grinned imperturbably. "Nice cheerful mood you are in tonight. You seem more like a man attending his own funeral than a successful playwright whose solicitous friends await breathlessly the rising of the curtain tomorrow night on the great—" Bennett's voice ceased abruptly, and he stopped to avoid a well directed sofa pillow. "Well, of course," he continued, "if you feel that way— But honestly, Jack, what is the trouble? Something's cutting, and cutting deep. Out with it."

He laid his hand on the shoulder of the man staring moodily into the fire. "What's wrong? Has the fair Evelyn been stirring things up—playing the devil with her adoring fiancé?"

"I can no more imagine the fair Evelyn's doing anything that her fond mamma disapproved of," Travers replied drily, "than I can imagine you in the role of a lady killer."

"Well, you are in a sweet frame of mind; I'll be hanged if I will talk to you." Bennett rose suddenly from his chair and started for the door.

"Hold on, Ben," Travers called after him, as he had his hand on the knob. "Come back here; I've got to talk to you."

"Oh, if it's the play—" Bennett

wheeled suddenly with a laugh, that died on his lips as he saw the change on the other's face. "All right, old man," he said, coming back and throwing himself again into the Morris chair. "You know you can talk to me; tell me what the trouble is."

There was a moment's silence, broken only by the crackling of the logs; then, raising his head, Travers turned to the other with a smothered groan. "It is the play—it's driving me mad! I can't get away from it! I can't get away from *her*! She's in it! She's all through it! She's—" He stopped abruptly, struggling to control himself, then subduing his voice to a lower key, went on more quietly. "It was during the month I spent in the Berkshires last summer where I went to finish up 'The Dawning.' I found her there, a girl not like other girls, a girl who'd seen nothing of life, who'd known nothing of men. She was not the sort I was used to, and I hadn't the sense, the decency, to let her alone."

"Of course, we couldn't help being thrown together, but I thought it a good chance for a flirtation. I wasn't satisfied just to be friends; I wanted more—I wanted to see her stirred up—awake. I felt the possibilities that were in her. I wanted to show her herself as she really was. It wasn't simply that she was beautiful—she was different. The whole affair was different; there was a charm, an uncertainty about it that was like nothing I had ever felt before. She had a way of looking up at you from under her lowered lashes that sometimes made one almost mad to know what lay behind those quiet eyes of hers. I never saw a girl with more self-control

and then, at times, one more impulsive, more absolutely natural. It piqued me. I set about making her like me—but I couldn't follow the hackneyed rules of the game. She had a way of looking at me when I tried anything out of the ordinary that stopped me and made me feel like the cad I was.

"Ben, I am not going to keep this up all night, but I've got to the point where I have to talk to someone.

"Well, I was writing my play. I'd read it to her, and sometimes she'd suggest points to change—I never dreamed a girl like that would notice. Unconsciously I worked her into it—and before I knew it the heroine was more a study of her than the woman I'd planned to draw. I thought that the play came first, but now I know that it was she who held me, who drew me on. I was trying to make her lose that self-control that shut me out. I wanted to see her when she was not mistress of herself, when a glimmer of the primitive woman would show itself in her; and deliberately, in cold blood, I—I made love to her. The first night she simply looked at me in that quiet way of hers, then without a word, walked by me, and I, like an awkward, overgrown boy, stood and watched her out of sight.

"The next day, which was my last although she did not know it, she persistently avoided me, but that night I begged her to give me one more chance. She did."

Travers paused; his cigarette had gone out; he was staring with half-shut eyes into the slowly dying fire. After a little, he drew a deep breath, then went on slowly, monotonously, almost as though speaking to himself.

"That night she came to me down at the edge of the garden—there was an old tree there, where she sometimes met me. I got there first, and I watched as she came toward me across the grass. She was beautiful that night—all in white, and there were red roses at her breast and in her dark hair. There was something different about her then—a look in her eyes, a note in her voice, a mysterious change about her that

gripped me. Maybe it was her beauty—maybe it was the moonlight that fell about her—maybe it was just my ghost of a chance; whatever it was, I could no more have stopped what happened than I could have stopped breathing. I took her in my arms and kissed her. At first she resisted; then she was very quiet. Suddenly she raised her head and kissed me. She gave me all she had to give in that one kiss—she gave herself."

There was a deep silence. Bennett changed his position. Travers, his eyes shut, his head in his hands, went on in a changed voice, and Bennett saw that his face when he raised it was white and strained.

"I left the next morning. I never saw her again. Of course I promised to write—all men do that—and I honestly meant to, but I put it off. I didn't know what to say. I thought it would be easier if I waited. Then I went down to the Faeburns', and the old affair with Evelyn was on. Before I knew it people were congratulating us, and I, like an idiot, for a while, thought I must be happy—that I had found the real thing." Travers gave a short laugh that had no mirth in it, and rising, stood looking down at Bennett. "Real thing! It's about the poorest imitation I ever ran up against. Oh, we're a correct and model pair, the fair Evelyn and I, not exactly the 'billing and cooing' kind, but still people say we're made for each other. Well, that's all, Ben. Rather a commonplace, uninspiring story, eh? The story of a man who'd played the cad, and then woke up to what he might have had when it was gone."

"And you never saw her again?" Bennett asked as he rose also.

Travers shook his head. "Never. I wrote her once, a month later, trying to explain. It was a crude, fool letter. How could I explain I had gone into the game simply for the fun, the fascination of it? I never heard from her. I wrote her again some time ago, and today the letter was returned from the dead letter office. I suppose she had gone away; at any rate, she never got it. I'm not going to apologize, Ben,"

he added with a short laugh, as he walked to the sideboard and poured himself a drink. "I somehow felt I had to talk."

"I'm glad you did," Bennett answered. "I'm sorry for you, Jack. Of course you weren't—well, admirable; but Lord," he added, knocking the ashes from his cigarette, "we all do it. I guess we're a selfish lot, and what we want we usually get in one way or another. You were after a new sensation, and you got maybe more than you bargained for. Well, I won't preach; and I am sorry for you. It's—it's tough luck," he added, coming up to Travers and laying a hand on his shoulder. "Get to bed, old man, and dream of the play tomorrow. Don't sit up thinking; it's a poor thing to do. Take my advice; go to bed."

When the door had closed behind him, Travers went back to the grate and stood looking down at the fire that had burned itself out and now lay in the gray ashes of its triumph. Somewhere in the house in monotonous tones a clock struck the hour; then the echoes died slowly into silence. Travers raised his head and looked around the room, where the dawn stealing in through the window fell in ghostly mockery on its disorder.

From the street came the faint rumble of the market wagons; somewhere in the distance a dog barked; outside were signs of the coming day. He pulled aside the curtains and stared out at the awakening world. Then, with a little shiver, he dropped the folds into place and turned slowly away.

The overture had begun the following night when the Faeburn party arrived at their box, and as Travers helped Evelyn to remove her cloak she suddenly turned toward him with hands outstretched and whispered softly: "I know I am going to be very, very proud of you tonight, Jack." There was a note in her voice, a light in her eyes, that he had never seen before. Truly this was a new, strange Evelyn, this Evelyn of the soft words and tender glances. After all, she *was* fond of him, and life

with this beautiful woman might become one of the pleasant, tranquil idyls of which he had dreamed.

"Nervous?" Bennett whispered to Travers after he had seen Mrs. Faeburn comfortably seated.

"Guilty," Travers answered, laughing. "My one consolation is that Julia Overton's starring."

"And you're lucky to have her," Bennett broke in enthusiastically. "She always makes good, and Broadway's gone crazy over her."

"Oh, Evelyn," Mrs. Faeburn's cool tone interrupted, "there are the Van Ordens; and Catherine is with that Spence boy again."

Mother and daughter turned to greet the new arrivals in the adjoining box, and for a time there was an incessant sound of chatter and congratulations for the playwright, who, as Bennett remarked, bore it with the courage of a Christian martyr. Nothing but the perseverance of Evelyn and her mother could have dragged him into any place so conspicuous. But Mrs. Faeburn was quite willing to be on inspection with the man of the hour, and as the lights went down and the curtain rose, she settled herself with the air of one who had done her duty and done it well.

To Travers, sitting back in the box gazing at the miniature world before him, it seemed as though he had nothing in common with those men and women behind the footlights acting his play, speaking the words, the thoughts he had created. He watched it from the standpoint of an outsider. It seemed impossible that in this commonplace way the dream of a man's life was being realized. For years he had looked forward to that day when the world should know him—when he could prove—Suddenly he started, and Bennett beside him heard him draw his breath sharply, saw him lean forward and clutch the arms of his chair tightly, as the white-clad figure of a girl came on the stage.

"Jack! What's the matter?" he whispered hurriedly.

For a moment Travers did not answer, and his eyes never left the face of

the actress, who was speaking now in a low, clear voice of wonderful melody. "It's the girl, Ben! It's Rosalie—Rosalie Ferris! There's something queer here—that's not Julia Overton."

"Jack, you're crazy!"

"I'm not! I'm not!" he repeated doggedly. "It's Rosalie!"

"But where is Julia Overton?"

Travers shook his head impatiently. "I don't know any more than you do. I only know I've found *her*."

In the dim light, Bennett saw that his face was very white. There was a strange glitter in his eyes, and as he turned again toward the stage, unconsciously his lips were framing the words she was speaking.

"Why isn't Julia Overton playing?" Evelyn leaned back to ask. "Is that her understudy? Oh, how provoking!"

Travers did not answer. He did not even hear her question. Every motion, every cadence in her voice was bringing back memories of that month in Arcady. He felt that he himself must speak in answer to her pleading words.

He had seen her a hundred times as she was now, in a white dress, her hair simply parted; and she was looking at the man with her in that same way that long ago she had once looked at him. But never had he so felt her charm, her beauty until tonight, never known the tenderness of her voice; and when she laughed it was so natural, so spontaneous, so full of the joy of life, he found himself smiling with her. Oh, it was good just to see her again!

As in a dream Travers watched the act drawing to its climax. Breathlessly he waited for the heroine's last speech. Rosalie and he had written it one drowsy summer afternoon in their favorite part of the old garden, and now memories of the time they had spent together came crowding back upon him, filling him with a strange elation that left him with a feeling of pain and unrest. The words were sad, full of pathos and the suffering of a woman's heart.

He watched her as she stood alone, a slender, drooping figure, in the center of the stage, her arms at her sides, her head raised, a little, her eyes staring

ahead of her, a world of sorrow in their depths. Then in a despairing gesture she raised her arms, and with a little broken cry, more eloquent than words, sank to the floor.

For a moment after the curtain fell there was silence, complete, unbroken. The audience were still under the spell of this new actress who so undeniably held them, who thrilled them with a power Julia Overton never had possessed. Then, swept away by the emotion she had aroused in them, the house rose to her in thunders of applause. Again and again she came before the curtain, smiling down at them above the flowers she held in her arms, while Travers, the blood hammering in his temples, his eyes aching with the intensity of their gaze, sought to shake off Bennett's insistent hand upon his shoulder that was dragging him back to a world of realities.

"She's made good, all right," Bennett was laughing, while he slapped him on the shoulder. "But it's you they're wanting now. You've got to go, old man," as calls for the author rang through the house insistently.

As one half dazed, Travers rose and followed the man sent for him. A moment later he was behind the scenes, and Chambers, hot and perspiring, his face in a broad grin, was gripping his hands, crying enthusiastically: "You've made good, Travers! It means Broadway for a year! Thank the Lord Julia Overton was sick—her understudy is worth ten of her."

She was coming toward him now, smiling, her arms full of roses, great, crimson roses, such as she had worn the night he kissed her.

Then the hot glare of the footlights was beating up upon them; her hand was in his; the applause of the people came as a confused murmur to his ears. He was dizzy with the perfume of the flowers, and in all that sea of color and sound he was conscious only of the intoxicating sense of her nearness to him.

"Speech! Speech!" The cries grew more insistent. Now he was on alone. But the words he spoke were not for the

applauding throng that swam before his eyes in a mist of light; they were meant only for a smiling girl with flowers in her arms, who long ago, in a dream garden of roses, had yielded him her woman's soul in one perfect kiss.

"You may come now." Travers rose from the chair, where for the last few moments he had been mechanically watching the stage hands shift the scenery, and followed the maid. The dressing room was heavy with the fragrance of the flowers that filled it. The perfume was in his nostrils, and for a moment he steadied himself against the door.

In one corner of the room before a long cheval glass stood Rosalie Ferris. She half turned as he entered and looked at him over her shoulder.

"You wished to speak to me?" she asked quietly, while her eyes met his, no shred of recognition in their depths. "Did you want any changes made in the last act?"

"Rosalie! Rosalie!" he cried happily, all the joy of this moment in his voice. "At last I have found you!"

She regarded him with a puzzled frown. "Have you been looking for me long?" she asked coolly.

"Why didn't you answer my letter?" he went on, disregarding her question.

"Had I received it, I don't doubt I should have been delighted to answer," she answered with an easy laugh, but her lips trembled a little and a vivid spot of color flamed in each cheek.

"Do you mean you never got it?"

"Really, Mr. Travers," she replied, a slight note of impatience in her voice, "I don't understand you at all. If you have nothing further to say I must ask you to excuse me. I—"

"Rosalie, what does this mean?" he asked blankly.

"This is the second time you have called me 'Rosalie,'" she interrupted. "I really do not understand you. It is a case of mistaken identity, I suppose," she added a trifle drily. "My name is Stella Gray, and to my knowledge I have never seen you before." She turned away as she spoke, but in a moment he

had cleared the space between them and was beside her.

"You deny you are Rosalie—Rosalie Ferris—the girl I knew last summer?" He spoke slowly, heavily. Her denial struck him as a blow in the face.

"Certainly," she answered. "Why do you ask me? I—I never knew you," she added in a low voice.

He drew his breath sharply, and came close to her, so close that the perfume of her hair filled his nostrils and made him fight against the desire to take her in his arms and kiss the lips that denied him.

"You know nothing," he said slowly, "of a certain month last summer, a month we spent together, you and I? You know nothing, remember nothing, of a night when you came to me in the garden—*our* garden, we called it—a night when I held you in my arms and kissed you?" He paused, but his eyes never left her face, and beneath the intensity of his gaze her own wavered and fell; she leaned wearily against the dressing table. "I suppose," he went on, a tinge of bitterness in his voice, "you do not remember that!"

"I remember nothing, absolutely nothing!" she answered quickly; then she went on slowly: "I have never seen you before. I never knew you."

"Rosalie! How can you so coolly—"

"Oh, why, why do you come here to bother me?" She turned and faced him. "I have said I don't know you," she added wearily. "Now go, please."

With an effort Travers pulled himself together. "I see," he answered slowly; "I have made a mistake. You are not the girl I thought you. I ask you to pardon me. I am sorry." He hesitated, then went on steadily: "I am sorry to have annoyed you."

He had one more glimpse of her as she stood facing him, a slender figure in white, with her black eyes raised to his—almost pleadingly he imagined; then as he hesitated for an instant they took on again that cold, hard look. The next moment the door closed behind him, and it seemed as though suddenly the gate through which he had had a vision of paradise had been shut in his face.

WIDOWCISMS

By HILDRIC DAVENPORT

STRANGE it is that the more a man cares for a woman the more he resents a similar tendency on the part of any other man.

Matrimony would soon be a lost art if we could begin at the end.

After the honeymoon four is company, two is none.

The less one knows how the better one loves.

A bachelor—the pet of many women.
A husband—the plague of one.

Women love; men make love.



MRS. GRAMERCY—If he married her for her money they will soon separate.
MRS. PARK—I don't think so. The way she doles it out to him it will last about fifty years.



"MRS. PIFFLEGILDER boasts that she is connected with some of the best families in the city."
"Ah! She has a telephone?"



THE man who wins a girl by flattery becomes painfully candid after the honeymoon.

THE FLAVOR OF LIFE

By ELLEN HENEY

MARCIA GRANTLEY laughed, a low, gurgling, chuckling laugh that women thought horrid and men unanimously admired.

A babyishly blonde woman, with wide blue eyes, turned her head and surveyed Mrs. Grantley curiously. Then she plaintively appealed to the group of women in her corner.

"What *do* men see in that Grantley woman, can you tell me?"

"She's different," said young Mrs. Allingham, "and clever. I rather like her, myself; one wonders of what she's thinking. And when you've started a man wondering—" She shrugged her shoulders.

"Her husband was crazy about her before they were married. She was a perfect nobody," said the babyish woman, who hated generalities.

"Ah, but he's convalescent now," suggested another.

"Cats," said Mrs. Allingham caressingly.

Marcia Grantley, smiling over the story a good-looking, slim girl was telling her, watched the group absently and thought, with a lazy contempt, that they were probably wondering why Hayward had married her, and how she "stood for" Hayward's flitting fancies.

Later, when the men had come in and she was gossiping delightfully with Billings, whose short fiction was making a big name for him, and who knew any number of the old Washington Square set, she watched Hayward, snugly ensconced in a chimney corner with the slim girl with the same indifferent eyes. But in the animated stream of reminiscence, repartee and discussion between her and Billings, she lost momentarily

her listless boredom and her face glowed vividly.

"They were a live coterie," Billings was saying, "and bound to be heard from. They're scattered some nowadays—you went among the first. Only last week, though, I saw a sketch of yours on a studio wall; it's too bad—" He stopped abruptly. "May I ask—your husband is here tonight?"

She nodded toward the chimney corner. "Over there."

She watched him oddly, while his glance went from Hayward, strong, handsome, smiling, irreproachable, to the charming, slim young debutante, and then back to her own thin, piquant face, but his eyes were expressionless.

"It must have been the sketch of 'Loch' and his chorus girl," she said. "Oh, is it there still? Why, it is quite three years ago."

"But Jenks has fled," Billings informed her. "He's doing profitable but soulless work in art heads now. I looked over the quarters for a *protégé*—who decided not to shift, after all."

As he left her to make his way to his hostess, she watched him absently. Three years! She had been married three years. Well, she had forgotten, had ceased to care; but the room before her, with its pretty, smartly gowned women and irreproachably clad men, vanished, and she saw Jenks in the inevitable velvetene coat and pipe, curled upon the pillows arguing lazily with hot-headed, anarchistic Rameski; Sarah Styles, with her wonderful, tumbling, blue-black hair and green eyes singing a haunting love song at Grayson, who hung white-faced above her; and Atkins, reckless, merry, devil-may-care, sending

smoke wreaths curling around a slim girl, who, charcoal in hand, sketched on a blank stretch of studio wall the word picture he was drawing for her torment and anguish. She presented now, she thought, but a tame, spiritless likeness of the slim girl; yet, nevertheless, it was she.

Marcia laughed softly to herself, and Billings, returning to make his adieus, was thrilled by the eyes she raised to him.

"She's happy, I suppose," he muttered to himself, and wondered for several days, at least.

"Loch—" how she had hated the careless mockery of it! It was Jenks who had fastened it to Jamison, the night he had brought the illusive, red-headed girl from the top floor into the studio. True, the Titian beauty had proved stupid—a disappointment, but, as Jenks said, it proved Jamison's "irresistibility."

"Regular old Lochinvar. Only, he doesn't need a steed; can bring 'em forth from out of the North or West or top floor front with a lift of his classic eyebrow, eh?" he jeered.

"Jenks is a fool, isn't he?" Jamison had appealed to her, but despite his petulance, the name had clung. He had wavered, they told her, like a bee from flower face to flower face, loving lightly with careless but artistic ease. Under his maddest protests of devotion, the jeering truth of the nickname rankled within her in vague bitterness. But, somehow, she had refused to believe, to sound the shallow depths of what he offered—until that night. Then, as her charcoal brought out in gay caricature the scene Atkins had stumbled on the night before, the dreamy gaze and rumpled hair of "Loch," as he gazed across a beer bottle and sandwich at a vast-hatted, typical chorus butterfly, his hand on hers, the crowd stopped arguing and singing and drew around to applaud. Within her heart the bitterness had flamed into rebellion. She knew that he did not, could not love her, was incapable of knowing the love she had given him. Throwing down the chalk, she had faced them with glowing

eyes and burning cheeks, laughing wildly, when the door was flung open and "Loch" stood on the threshold, looking from the crowd to the picture, his handsome, reckless face white, hurt, incredulous, angry. For a week then he had disappeared, and she had waited feverishly—until she learned that he had been secretly married to the chorus girl for several months.

Marcia Grantley shuddered at the remembered white heat of agony that had scorched her heart—and driven her in listless despair to marry Hayward, the "persistent Philistine," as the studio had dubbed him. Wearily she wondered that this raking over of dead ashes revealed no slightest glow of the hot passions and pains of those days. But she knew it was not the ghost of dead love that of late had been calling her—rather the voice of freedom, echoing in her bondage of boredom.

She started and looked up smilingly as Hayward leaned deferentially over her and assured herself for the hundredth time that he was a very charming husband. Long ago she had shut her eyes tightly and clenched her fists, vowing to accept what the days might bring. But there was a stirring within her now, a dawning resentment, a wild impulse to cut herself free from her stupid treadmill life. Back there the old hours were still—work and hope and things worth while.

How unutterably weary she was! Her heart ached for the old atmosphere, the faint-scented breath of a skylight studio, for work and play with her own people.

All the sleepless night she threshed it over, and her eyes were bright with a new daring as she gave Hayward his coffee next morning. He smiled at her contentedly.

"You're looking uncommonly bright this morning, Mar," he declared. "Wish you'd always wear that rose breakfast thingumbob."

"After all, there's nothing like a wife around the house, is there?" she laughed back.

This was unwonted breakfast gaiety from Marcia, and he smiled delightedly.

"I'd never be without one again," he affirmed solemnly.

Her heart was throbbing painfully as he touched her forehead lightly with his lips. She had never let him believe she cared, never pretended, but his devotion had not wavered. Still, despite her indifference, she had noted that of late he was devoting himself casually enough to one or another of the pretty women in their set. Perhaps he would not feel her desertion so keenly. Rather to her wonder, she felt a tiny pang at the thought, and she analyzed the fluttering eagerly, almost hopefully. But the most she could make of it was an honest liking. After all, she was playing the part of a coward in staying when her soul, all her true self, told her she was free to seek her individual happiness. She would suffer no longer the intolerable ache and boredom of the empty days. Three years wasted already—in a panic of eagerness she seized a pen and wrote:

I am leaving you—forever. Forgive me, and try to understand. I am stifling; you must let me go. There's something more in life for me, at least, and I'm going back to it. Don't try to follow, I beg you. Divorce me quietly; you can arrange it, can you not? And then you will find someone who will appreciate and love you as you deserve.

Sealing it, she smiled rather wistfully.

"She may appreciate him better, but she will never understand him as well," she thought.

Wearily Marcia Grantley mounted the last of the five steep, narrow flights of stairs that led to the skylight studio and struggled with the key.

"In Jenks's day the stairs never seemed so steep," she thought.

"Let me open it for you," cried a voice in her ear.

"Pray don't trouble," she said coolly, without turning her head.

"Independent young person!" he laughed, and then, as the door flew open, he followed Marcia into the room, unheeding her reserve with a gay *insouciance*, and with a paper knife rapped sharply on the steampipe in the corner.

"I told Miss Dwyer below that I'd

let her know when you got back," he explained. "She'll hear that."

"Sell anything?" he demanded, approaching the portfolio she had dropped on the couch beside her. Hastily she drew it toward her.

"No," she said quietly.

"Why so haughty of late, lady fair?" he demanded. "You were friendly enough at first."

"At first. I've known you only a week. A week," she repeated hysterically.

"Am I so changed, then, since our sweethearting days?" he protested.

She stared at him dumbly, a tide of aversion for the handsome, dissipated face surging in her heart.

"No—it's only myself; I dare say I've known for a week," she laughed.

The man shrugged his shoulders, spreading out his not overclean hands in an affected gesture of hopelessness. Born of her own shrinking disgust, she felt a sudden odd twinge of pity for the unlucky chorus girl. Mingled with her bewilderment at finding "Loch" there in the old house on her return had been the first pang of lost illusion. He had accepted her arrival calmly, with the old egotism that her euphemistic girlhood had called "*insouciance*."

"Loch," she asked suddenly, "what became of the girl?"

The flattered triumph of his glance, the elaborately careless shrug, showed her how he had misunderstood.

"Ah, she was impossible," he said mournfully.

"No love scenes, please," interrupted a voice from the door, and a little round girl with a pert nose and a mass of reddish hair advanced jauntily.

"Tired, poor dear?" she demanded. "Here, give me your hat. I'll make you a pot of 'tay' in a jiffy, now, sha'n't I?" busying herself at the tea table in the corner.

Marcia sank back helplessly. The daily assault upon her provisions had amused her at first; probably the poor things were hungry. But of late the easy friendliness of it had seemed almost insolent. Moreover, she had not been very successful with her illustrations so

far, and the money in the bank was shrinking daily. Fitting up even this dingy studio had decreased it alarmingly. She checked her sinking courage with a start. What she needed was work, work, work; it was the only thing life had left for her. Finally, laughingly, she drove Jamison and Miss Dwyer out and set up her easel. But the fire had waned; there was no spirit in the lines; her pen lagged lifeless on the sheets before her.

She wondered bitterly if she had been mistaken, after all, in the conviction of her strength. Looking around the room gloomily, she hated its cheap, makeshift tawdriness, possessed by a gnawing unrest as she realized that, the rose glow of distance lifted, enchantment had fled. Hayward, she reflected, was sunk now in his big chair before the glowing library fire, and a poignant longing for the comfort and enveloping warmth of her home swept over her.

"Lord, what a materialist I have grown in those three fat years!" she sighed.

Rising, she pinned on her hat; she would go out to Raquet's for dinner. There, indeed, must linger an aroma of the old days that would waft her back, bring the old thrill, the old joy, the old sincerity. Some of the old crowd, even, might be there, straying back from the wide scattering. Her face, paler than when she had come to the skylight room three weeks before, looked finely distinctive against the background of velvet hat and inky furs, and at Raquet's they stared at her openly.

"Messy-looking men," she thought resentfully, seating herself with her back to the room at a tiny table.

The hot soup and sour wine warmed her, but the unrest seethed, pounded unceasingly within. Her soul cried for a meaning to existence. The flat, dreary solitude of life mocked her. She had failed again; was there nothing left? To see life clearly hurt; her heart and mind seemed to sigh sadly for the glamour of her blinded youth. But there must be something else, something saner. As she stared, unseeing, at the wall before her, she caught the voices of two of the messy men behind.

"It's only youth can taste the fine flavor of life," one said. "After, it grows—flat. But one can be comfortable." She smiled faintly. It came like an answer to her questioning. And then a different voice broke on her musing.

"I'd know your hat in a million," it said. She looked up to see her husband standing, smiling down at her, and then he calmly drew out the opposite chair.

"A taste of the old days down here is rather cheering in contrast, eh?" he said carelessly, watching her face keenly. "Are you tired of it?"

"Yes," she murmured. At his face, his kind, easy voice, his satisfactory presence, the unrest fled; peace and comfort settled down upon her spirit.

"A nice husband is a satisfactory substitute for illusions," she said flippantly. But they smiled, happily, understandingly, into each other's eyes.



T W I L I G H T

By EDGAR S. NYE

SOFT stepping down the western way,
Her gray robes trailed in rosy light,
She comes to lead the weary Day
Through the dim portals of the Night.

LA FELINE

By HERBERT KAUFMAN

YOU have come back to me through the ages—
Through the dumb, dead, blind years of ago;
And I saw you tonight in your glory
Of chiffon and lace and gem glow.
You are jeweled in man-madding beauty
As you were when the world was a-young,
When your passion-depthed eyes
Shamed the stars of God's skies,
And your soul knew not what songs it sung.

You are married, they tell me, yet whisper
That many men preen in your trail;
Fools who sue with soft sobs for your pity
And sigh out their bloodless travail;
Or they sing empty nothings of passion
And weep in their puny despair
As they vow you are stone
Then implore you and groan—
Hunters caught in their own bungling snare.

And you play with them, one, then another,
Purr and stretch in your sinuous length,
As a she leopard sports with her quarry,
Knowing full well the might of your strength.
You are still as you were in the cave days,
When you lusted with bared souls to toy,
And they pay just the same
For the joy of your game
When you tire and find that they cloy.

You are fair now with lotion and rouge tint,
You are fragranced with essence and scent,
You are gowned in the last mode of Paris
And shapely in fashion's new bent;
You are plated with code and convention
And the most judge you by your veneer,
But beneath all your show
There is in you the glow
Of the one thing that's stronger than fear.

You are still you—a radiant savage,
 And your soul, drowsing numb, yearns its mate;
 Not a weakling who comes with a love sigh,
 Or a fool who despairs of his fate,
 But a master whose passion will hurt you,
 Who will bruise you and tear you and take;
 Who will trample the code
 If it lie in his road,
 And forswear hope of God for your sake!



A MODERN GARDEN

By R. E. BLACK

IN olden days
 A knight would praise
 His flowers
 By likening them to ladies' eyes.
 Far other simile supplies
 This time of ours.

My lilies white
 In radiant light
 Alone,
 And fragrance sweet, their being shed;
 I now see in each trumpet spread
 A gramophone.

My monkshoods tall
 To guard my wall
 Secure;
 Now bear in every vizored face,
 Close fenced, a more than passing trace
 Of grim chauffeur.

My roses sweet,
 That bend to greet
 Me low,
 Now seem as though each flaming heart
 In part were flower and in part
 Electric glow.

Tho' scattered dreams
 And airy themes
 Afar,
 I still rejoice, through all my dells
 There is no single floweret smells
 Like motor car.

FROZEN FIRE

By FRANK K. M. REHN, JR.

"DID you want me?" She stepped into the dining room, a flush of eager pink tingeing the exquisite olive of her complexion.

Her husband stood squarely in front of the fireplace, a look of determination on the strong, granitelike features. His eyes were fixed now on her fingers busy with the fastening of her opera cloak, now on the filmy scarf that covered the dark masses of her hair.

"Did you want me?" she repeated.

"Yes, Carmen; I—" He stopped. She could see the muscles in his jaw swell as though he was making a great effort. Then all expression relaxed into the usual mask of strength his face presented to the world. "No matter," he finished. "Hope you enjoy the show."

The woman's black eyes flashed and a flood of color crimsoned her cheeks.

"Thank you," she answered icily. "I shall be late; better not wait up." Then she turned and left the room.

The man stood without moving; every muscle in the powerful frame seemed limp and impotent. A great pain looked out of the blue eyes, a pain frightful in its utter helplessness. The lips moved and the one word "Why?" came from them.

Steps sounded on the hardwood floor of the hall. Instantly the man's face became impassive. He passed one huge hand through his mass of light hair, straightened his tie and waistcoat and turned to the mantel for a cigar. The portières jingled slightly as someone entered the room. Without looking round, the man carefully cut the end of his cigar and demanded over his shoulder:

"A match, Albert."

Receiving no reply to his order, he swung round in mild surprise. An elderly man in evening dress stood near the center of the room. He held his hat and cane in his hand. A cigarette drooped artistically from beneath a thin gray mustache. Heavy eyebrows shadowed keen gray eyes in which lurked a faint smile of amusement. His free hand toyed with a carefully trimmed imperial that added greatly to undeniably distinguished features.

"Why, hello, Sontag! How did you get in?" said the man by the mantel, a shade of annoyance showing in his tone.

"Good evening, Godwin," returned the intruder. "I met the wife just going out as I came in. She told me I'd find you up here in the dining room. Thought we'd go down to the club together."

"Thanks—I'm not going tonight," said Godwin.

The smile in the stranger's eyes deepened. "What's up?" he asked.

"Nothing—tired. Have a cigar?"

"Thanks; I prefer cigarettes," indicating the one in his mouth. He started to remove his coat. "Don't mind if I stay a little while, do you?"

"No; glad to have you," said Godwin, the first sign of cordiality showing in his voice. "Let's go into the library."

They passed down the hall together and entered a large, low studded room in dark green, with heavy mission furniture. From over the somber black walnut bookcases the heads of polar bear, elk, moose and other denizens of the Far North looked solemnly down. The books, mostly large tomes on scientific subjects interspersed with travel

and adventure, were bound in full morocco. At the far end of the room a door communicated with a room beyond. Through this Sontag caught a glimpse of brilliant light falling on yellow hangings and exquisite Louis Quinze furniture. He walked to the entrance and stood looking in. Everywhere was light and color, exquisite vases, ceramics and art objects, wonderful rugs and delicate hangings chosen with a true artist's eye for beauty in line, color and form. On a little table in one corner stood a small coffee cup, and beside it lay a gold-tipped cigarette still smoking.

"Mrs. Godwin's boudoir, I take it," he asked over his shoulder.

"Yes," said Godwin.

"She loves the beautiful," said Sontag slowly.

"Yes," said Godwin.

"And you surely indulge her."

"Have a drink?" interrupted Godwin. A butler entered with a tray of cracked ice, Scotch, rye and vichy.

"Why, thanks," said Sontag. He crossed the room and helped himself. The butler withdrew. Beside the tray on the centertable lay two little books in brilliant soft leather bindings. They looked incongruous amid the heavy, somber surroundings. Sontag picked up one of them.

"Hello—poetry?" he asked.

A dull red dyed Godwin's face.

"They're Mrs. Godwin's," he said shortly, and poured himself out another glass.

Sontag allowed the book in his hand to fall open and began to read aloud what was there:

"STRANGERS YET

"After years of life together,
After fair and stormy weather,
After travel in far lands,
After touch of wedded hands—
Why thus joined, why ever met,
If they must be strangers yet?"

Under the spell of his voice the great lines in Godwin's face smoothed; a strange wistfulness crept into his eyes.

"But they only touch when met,
Never mingle—strangers yet."

Sontag's voice ceased. Entirely ob-

livious of his surroundings, Godwin sprang to his feet.

"By God, why—" His eyes met those of his visitor and he stopped short. "Why—" he stammered, "why the devil don't you drink something, man?" and seizing his glass drained it in one mighty gulp.

A little hopelessly Sontag refilled his and sank into an easy chair facing his friend. For a while the conversation flowed easily on the topics and business of the day. Then a silence fell upon the two men, each busy with his own thoughts. Far off a clock in the hall chimed eleven. Sontag's voice suddenly broke the silence.

"Don't you miss your life in the North, John?"

A momentary gleam of longing lighted Godwin's face. "You bet I do, Jack!"

"Why don't you go back to it? You're too big a man for this puny existence."

Godwin's eyes looked his amazement. "Go back?" he echoed. "How can I?" with a glance toward his wife's room.

Sontag did not answer at once. When he did speak his voice was very low.

"If—if anything should happen—you would go back, John?" he asked almost imploringly.

"What the devil do you mean? What *should* happen?"

His friend came over and sat on the edge of the huge table.

"There's a certain old Indian legend about a humming bird and a glacier; it goes something like this:

"Away to the north there dwelt once a great Glacier. He was the biggest, strongest and handsomest of his race. When he had brought into subjection all his own people, he longed to possess the lands to the south, and journeyed thither. There he met a Humming Bird. She was the most beautiful of all *her* race, and captivated by his strength and the great deeds he had accomplished, she fell in love with him and married him. But, alas, they soon found they did not speak the same language. Sunshine, warmth and laughter she must have, and none of these, of course, could he give her. Whenever she came

near him a great chill struck through her, so that she languished, and he, poor fellow, could do nothing. For while he gave her everything, he could not give her that which she must have.

"At length, she met one of her own race—a fascinating fellow who could give her all that she longed for. So one day she flew away with her humming bird lover.

"When the Glacier found she had left him, his grief and rage knew no bounds. He vowed vengeance on his rival; then the thought of taking vengeance on so mean and insignificant a thing as a humming bird thwarted his rage. So in despair he climbed to the top of the loftiest mountain and hurled himself down. Of course he was dashed to pieces, and when the surrounding people came to view the shattered remains they found that which made them marvel, that which none had ever suspected, for in the very center of the twisted mass of ice glowed a great, flashing pool of molten fire."

Godwin moistened his lips and tried to speak, but his friend checked him with a gesture.

"I know you'll think me a meddling old fool, but I must speak, John; I've watched this as long as I can stand it! I knew Carmen long before she became your wife—and I know her, and I know you. She married you because you piqued her self-love, her admiration. It's what a man does, not what he says, that wins a woman—but it's what he says, not what he does, that holds her. You two are at the extremities of the poles. You're a Saxon of the Saxons, she a Latin of the Latins. She cannot say 'Good morning' without making it mean much more—and you cannot say 'I love you' and make it mean more than 'Good morning.'"

Godwin's breath came in gasps. He tried several times to speak, and at last exclaimed: "You're right!" and fell back into his chair. The two men sat looking steadily at each other. At last, with great effort, Godwin asked:

"You mean Maitland?"

Sontag nodded. "She's out with him again tonight, John, as you know."

He saw Godwin's great hands grip the arms of his chair.

In the silence that followed they heard the front door close. Both men started. Before either could do or say anything there was a swish of skirts in the hall and Carmen entered. She was flushed and excited. At the sight of Sontag, a look of relief shone in her eyes.

"Oh, Jack, I'm glad you're still here!" She swept into the room and stood facing the two men, one hand resting on the table as though at a bar of justice. "I have something to say to John, and—and I'm a little afraid."

Godwin shifted uneasily. Sontag cleared his throat.

"I know I'm in the way," he murmured; "so, if you'll excuse me, I'll—"

"Stay just where you are," ordered Carmen imperiously.

She turned to her husband.

"There is no use in mincing words, John, though, *please* believe me, I do not wish to hurt you. We have made a great mistake—you and I. I thought you loved me, and you don't—you *can't!*" she burst forth passionately. "You don't know what love means! You're fond of me, yes, and you give me everything—for which, believe me, I *am* grateful, but— Oh, I can't stand it any longer and I've come to tell you, so you—so you'll understand!"

"What do you propose to do?" Godwin's voice was even as steel.

"I shall leave here tonight, and stay with some friends until we can arrange about a separation."

"By God, you will not!" roared Godwin. He took a stride toward her. She did not shrink, but the color leaped to her face—joyously it seemed to Sontag.

"Why not?" she asked a little breathlessly, her voice low and thrilling.

"Because I—" There was a moment of tense silence that held Carmen and Sontag with the grip of fate. "Because I'm your husband!" finished Godwin. Even to himself, his voice sounded weak.

A harsh laugh burst from Carmen.

"I thought so!" she scoffed. "Ice—pure ice! *That* for marriage!" She tore her wedding ring from her finger and

dashed it to the floor. "Believe me, Jack"—she turned appealingly to Sontag—"this is not the hasty affair it seems. I've tried, oh, my God, how I've tried! But—I—I simply can't!" Her voice broke in a sob.

She crossed to the door, then stopped and looked back pleadingly. Godwin stood like a pillar of stone.

"Have you anything to say to me, John?"

Sontag saw the muscles in his friend's throat and neck quiver and strain, the great hands clench—but after a moment Godwin only shook his head.

"Good-bye, then," said Carmen, and passed hastily down the hall.

Godwin staggered, and took a step

forward. Sontag saw his mouth open as though to call, then heard the front door shut softly. For a moment neither man moved. Then Godwin turned like a flash. His eyes glared round the room. An instant later he had seized the table—a weight it would have taken two strong men to lift—and in one mighty effort, heaved it above his head.

"Hell!" he roared, and hurled it against the wall.

There was a mighty rending and splintering of wood and glass. Then, as the whole mass crashed to the floor, Godwin fell forward and lay sobbing.

Sontag stood motionless, looking down at him, at the shattered iceberg enclosing the pool of fire.



TRANSFORMATION

By THOMAS WALSH

THINK you the butterfly remembers
The travail that as worm she knows,
Or branch gives thought to bleak Decembers
The while it bends beneath the rose—

That I, whom chimes of longing sadden
As life's last minarets of sun
In gloom are crumbled, shall not gladden
With thought of you, beloved one?



THE popular man does not hide his light under a bushel, but rather his shady side.



DON'T talk about yourself—your friends will do plenty of that for you.

THE TRINITY MIRAUD

By MABEL WOOD MARTIN

DARRAGH wrenched open his cabin door and stepped out into the wildest night he had ever seen. The deck heaved under his feet so that he dared not attempt to cross it. He clung to the knob and faced the storm with amazement.

Lightning flashed cabalistic signs across a sky so heavy and black it appeared about to drop. The tongues of monster waves licked greedily at the vessel's sides. The winds tore with the teeth of fury at this land structure, which they seemed to wish to destroy as a spectator of the contest that was preparing.

For miles and miles the lightning disclosed the spaces of the sea rushing wildly as toward some goal; the white flashes of light traveled through the night like super-beings throwing open the sealed doors of the universe. Colossal things were happening out in that black space; the birth of new worlds contested, the assassination of old worlds brought about.

A bolt grazed the deck. Darragh followed its trail with his eyes and beheld a drama almost as startling as the one enacting out at sea.

The figures of this group formed a fit foreground for that wild scene. The woman, her slender form swaying at every moment in mortal peril, steadied an easel before which a man, under a dim light with arm upraised, knelt. Their preoccupation was a miracle. Of the storm, the sea, the danger, they were heedless as gods.

Darragh envied them the momentousness of their work, envied, too, the man his swift dexterity of hand. He watched him with a slowly growing bitterness.

He, too, could read the hidden letters of scenes like this—but he would never paint them. It had taken the years of a wasted youth and the best masters of Paris to demonstrate this. He was a failure at the art where this man, he was sure, was a success.

But the woman! What spirit moved her? There she stood struggling with the easel, buffeted by the tempest, and that moment by a sudden lurch almost hurled into the sea.

Darragh started, angered, to her assistance, only to be himself flung prone. When he had got to his feet the couple were gone.

Fighting wind and water, he got to the saloon. A host of frightened faces confronted him as he entered. Tense apprehension was the mood of the room. Men crowded around him as the newcomer out of the night, and inquired in unnatural voices how things went without.

Before he had time to answer a spasm of the storm flung the group apart. Darragh fell against the side of the cabin. The next moment the room turned bodily before his eyes; contorted faces whirled in the revolution. These assaults continued; the sea seemed to have leaped upon the decks to destroy. The occupants of the cabin, clutching wildly at furniture for support, looked to see it crash at any moment through the sides. A fearful tearing sound struck like a scream through the noise of the water. The ship shook under the agony of a mortal blow. Darragh knew that he was waiting for the moment when they should sink.

But as if satisfied with their work, the waters retreated. They struck the

ship with a lessening violence. Except for the wounded quivering of the vessel there might have been hope.

The cabin door opened and the ship's officials, their faces frozen in the struggle with the storm, pushed in.

"Get to the boats!" they ordered, hurriedly singling out the women and children and forming them into lines that with shouts and oaths they led out into the night.

When Darragh got out, the crowd around the ship's ladder that led to the waiting boats below was so dense and taut that passage through it was impossible. Noise augmented the panic. The shrieks of the wind, the roar of the water mingled with sobs, prayers and threats.

The captain and the mates, pistols in their hands, beat back the steerage passengers and dragged forth their inexorable selections. The line which the ship's men formed against the advance upon the ladder was assailed from every side. Darragh threw his own body into the rampart and helped fight the tide that threatened to overpower it. He lived a few awful moments as an arbiter of life and death. As he struck back or pulled forth, he wondered how even a God could endure to preside over human fate. He prayed for the moment when it should all end.

The last boat was loaded before he had any idea what was to become of him. The captain ordered him to descend the ladder. He went enveloped in a ferocious darkness, clinging to the swaying steps. The crew followed him, and last the captain. When they were all in the boat was overcrowded.

The word had been given to put off; the small boat had wrenched free of its fastenings, when a shot rang out of the black bulk of the vessel. A man's voice called desperately to the boat. Two forms were coming down the ladder. When they reached the gangplank, a flash of lightning disclosed them to Darragh as the couple he had seen in the storm.

The light from the lanterns set forth the rest of a scene from which those in the boat turned to the less terrible

spectacle of the sea. "There's room for only one more—in this boat," the captain called. He ordered it put back, and himself attempted to get near the landing. Whatever it was he proposed doing, he never got the time to do it.

The voices of the man and the woman rose wildly in the storm. A death grapple took place on that narrow plank separating them from destruction. With a fearful cry that sank into every soul in the boat, the woman flung the man's arms off her and started to leap from the plank. She was caught with miraculous swiftness and flung by the man into the boat.

A crash sounded overhead. The ship keeled threateningly over the small boat. It swerved swiftly, saving itself from being caught in the suction of the sinking vessel. The form on the gangplank was not seen again.

The woman had fallen like a stone across Darragh's feet. He tried to lift her, to restore her to consciousness, but it was hours before he succeeded in raising her to a crowded place beside him. Too weak to sit up, she fell forward with a moan. He caught her in his arms; there she remained throughout the night. Once or twice, as the waves tossed the boat like a plaything, she clutched him in her fright. Darragh reassured her with his clasp. He had never seen the woman's face; he did not know who she might be; but all through the hours of that terrible night they clung to each other in a union of peril.

The small boat rocked in the black pits of the sea till dawn, when the storm broke. Morning came through a dense fog. Darragh heard one of the mates say they must be some three or four hundred miles off the French coast. Their hope lay in drifting into some steamer's course.

When the food was distributed Darragh, cramped from his strained position, carefully lifted the woman's head. She sat up with a start, confronting the gaze of the boat. Darragh felt something leap suddenly into his throat. It was as if a miracle had happened—this

face was so wonderful, so incredible, here in the wastes of the seas.

The others in the boat were all men, and they were breaking their fast, but for a long moment they forgot everything but the face of the woman of last night's tragedy. From this profound concentration of attention she attempted to free herself. Her gaze clung to Darragh as a refuge.

The food which he dumbly proffered she thrust back. "I do not wish to live, monsieur," she murmured with a sob.

Unable to bear the rigid, upright position, she rested with her head on Darragh's knees. He held her like a child, and induced her to take food. A strange sense of ownership had taken root in him. For hours out in the blank spaces of the sea, with death lurking through the grim mists, he stared down on that beautiful head. Once, roused by his ministrations, she exclaimed: "You cherish my life, monsieur, whereas it is a crime that I should live."

Few spoke in the boat. Every soul was occupied with the intense problem of its own fate. Strange mental panoramas unfolded before their minds. Life as a completed experience passed under inspection.

Darragh, too, was engaged in this review. Was this, then, he wondered, to be the end of that revolution of his life that he had planned not so many months ago on that peak of the Andes? He remembered the silver revelation of that night. Standing like a solitary muezzin on the Tower of the World, overlooking the nations and the seas, so close to the heavens that his peak seemed an island looking out on starlighted shores past which the worlds traveled on eternal paths, Darragh, the outcast of Art, had received its summons to return.

Five years ago he had left Paris in defeat and despair. The words of Beaujeu, his teacher, had crystallized the verdict: "Monsieur, you have the imagination of a master and the execution of a mechanic!"

To forget his tragedy—it was nothing

less, for the man had offered up his soul piecemeal—he had gone to South America, resuming the civil engineering that with his family was an ancestral profession.

Flat, bleak years they had been, years in which his starved desires rose at every turn to wrestle with him, and hopeless dreams poisoned his youth with their urge.

That night he had seen the futility of this fight against himself. Better go down to death in the struggle than to live apart from it.

Confronting the light, so powerful and personal that it seemed the essence of thousands of sentient beings, he thought of the one man who could both see with the inner eye and transmit—Miraud, the great generalist who personified the mood of the ocean, the face of the night sky, the multiple guises of light till they breathed their message on the bare places of the soul. Miraud painted things, they said, that nobody had ever seen. He looked into the hidden places of the universe with the eye of a god.

To both men it had been given to read the romance of the elements, the symbolism of light and dark, but to only one had it been given to translate.

The girl broke in upon Darragh's thoughts with one of her rare utterances. "The man who perished, monsieur," she said in a hushed voice, "was Adolphe Miraud."

Darragh's startled movement shook the boat. "Miraud—dead!" he cried aghast.

"Yes, monsieur; it was his life against mine—his so valuable to the world—to posterity. God has made a mistake," she said in a dead voice, "a hideous, irretrievable mistake!" She turned her eyes to the horizon of the waters interrogating the infinite extent that stood to her mind somehow for omnipotence.

"You were — his wife?" Darragh asked at last.

"The wife of Miraud," she replied, "was his art."

That afternoon a great commotion arose in the boat. The girl pointed to

the fleck upon the ocean. "Ah—these poor people will be saved!" she exclaimed.

Prayerfully they watched the speck grow. Its size increased to the point where it could no longer be thought one of their own boats. When it was made out beyond all doubt to be a vessel, they rowed the small boat frantically in its direction. They hoisted pieces of clothing upon oars. Chill as it was, the sweat broke out on the men's faces as in tortured suspense they watched the ship's course. They called wildly across the wilderness of sea. Once in a lull of their voices weird echoes like calls from the great depths floated to them. It was a boat's horn. The great ship was sounding the seas for the lost.

At sunset they were picked up just as the dusk and the ocean were uniting to form their terrors.

The ship was one of several sent out in search of the wrecked vessel. At Brest they learned that only one man had been lost, the artist, Miraud.

As the passengers were disembarking the moment that Darragh had been dreading had arrived. The girl came to take leave of him. "We part here," she said. "Some time I hope to compensate you for your protection and care. My name, I have not told you, is Sophie de Montceyn. Monsieur was my teacher and friend. I want that you should understand."

Darragh confronted her blankly. "Do you mean that I shall not see you again?"

"For a while—no." Before he could frame a reply she had gone.

In Paris, the purpose for which he had returned went completely out of Darragh's mind. He upbraided himself continually for not having detained her even against her will. He searched for her continually, wandering restlessly on trails suggested by the flimsiest of clues.

In a dozen different periodicals he read of the end of the artist, Miraud. To the nation it was a calamity, to Art an irreparable loss. He had glorified the ancient gods of earth and air, of

fire and water. Into the pagan forces that he portrayed he breathed a soul. The sun was the creator; the wind, the voices of myriads of the dead and disembodied; the water was the life fund, holding the unborn multitudes. He was a prophet, a poet, a magician. His school was the universe.

Of the girl there was little said. She had no value in the world's measures. She, too, had disappeared.

But in the studios Darragh came upon her name again. Here she had a fame. A dozen painters of reputation pronounced her the most beautiful woman alive. Beside her, the less conservative declared, the Venus de Milo was an overrated tradition. Everyone was on fire to paint her. Each saw in her the individual inspiration that was to make him great. As the Modern Madonna, a Vampire, a Dancing Girl, a Sprite—the face of Sophie de Montceyn, had she consented, would have covered Europe.

But to none except Miraud had she ever been known to sit. And because of this partiality she was much anathematized in the studios.

Months went by. The studios speculated on her whereabouts. Darragh attempted to work. He entered one day the studio of Bérac, and stopped still upon the threshold. Sophie de Montceyn was there.

She came forward to greet him, but he could only stare down into her lifted face. It scattered all his previous conceptions: moonlight upon the Andes, the aurora borealis, an electric storm—these became suddenly flat and impersonal beside the light of this woman's live beauty.

Everyone was full of exclamations over her return. The girl herself was singularly quiet. When she left the studio, Darragh went with her. "I have searched France for you—for four months," he told her in a strained voice.

"Ah, why? Our lives run in different courses."

"Mine has changed. It will run alongside of yours now to the end of things."

She turned a pained, startled look to

him. "Monsieur," she said sadly, "Sophie de Montceyn exists no more. She has no life. Four months ago she perished under the sea. There exists now but the agent of Miraud. Come with me and I will try to make clear to you what I mean."

She took him to the abandoned house of Miraud—an old-fashioned building in the outskirts of the city.

As they stepped into the hall, the hush that met them was that of the grave. The great, bare house mourned for its master in desolate quiet. Even the sunlight entering the chambers seemed to have lost a friend. On the threshold of the studio, they paused as if for someone to appear. The girl brushed her hand across her brow and led Darragh in.

Miraud's things lay as he had left them. Darragh almost saw movement in the carelessly dropped brushes. A painting which the light made appear still wet stood upon the easel, unfinished. The room seemed alive with phantoms of the artist's brain. Bits of his personality clung to every object.

"One feels that he must still be working—somewhere!" the girl whispered.

From different corners of the room she brought silently the canvases which she arranged before Darragh. They held him in a spell, as whom have they not—these pictured places "ne'er seen on land or sea"? Their beauty touches the spirit like the strains of an unfathomable melody.

The girl went up to the easel and drew reverently back the cloth that had partly concealed it. Darragh uttered a low cry. So individual, so representative was this miracle of a dead man's hand, it seemed a living expression of himself. Out of the abyss of night, uniting earth and heaven into a mystic temple, the splendid pillars of the Northern Lights appeared. Those transfigured streams of light might have been the spirit of Miraud, the prophet of light.

The girl knelt upon a stool. "He speaks from that. It is the essence of Miraud—the transubstantiation of his

flesh and blood. What a work was to be done here!" She gazed in anguish about the deserted room. "Oh, where is Miraud! Why can't he come back? Every atom of this room pleads.

"The spirit of the man who would risk all danger; endure the arctics; scale the heights; dive down into the seas; slave, freeze, die ten times over for his work—his imperishable work; that man's spirit cries out here to me.

"As we stood upon the plank that terrible night and I fought with him to let me go—I who had no value to the world—he said, clutching me in an exhortation that was his last word on earth: 'Do my work. I go—but *it* must be done. If you live, see that my work is finished!'"

Twilight began to enter the studio. It went about the room folding the canvases in shadowy coverings. It appeared to signal the intruders to depart. Darragh saw it was Miraud's twilight—the soft-winged herald of the night.

"Who is to finish the work?" Sophie drew the cloth gently across the canvas as if she were closing eyes. "Who is to become the heir of Miraud's spirit?"

She closed the door softly behind them. "You see now why I have no life. He laid a command upon me. My last breath belongs to the work."

Darragh turned upon her abruptly. "How can you find the successor of Miraud?" he asked.

"Come tomorrow to the studio of Bérac. You shall see." The girl turned to the torchlights in the west blazoning the sun's bier. "You would approve—you would approve," she said, as if speaking to someone out there.

With fear and misgiving Darragh went the next day to Bérac's exhibition. He took no notice of the pictures—his faculties were concentrated upon Sophie. He watched her restlessly, his eyes scarcely leaving her face.

Gradually the room thinned of the mere public. There remained at last only those of the studio world, a few women and a score or so of artists with names in various stages of renown.

As the gaiety of his guests' spirits

transformed the occasion into a fête, Bérac perceived the fitness of unearthing refreshments. The company told stories, sang, and one girl with a genius for movement gave illustrations of the dancing over which Paris was later to go wild. In the center of a stormy circle, Giraud and Ladue, art critics and gladiators at argument, excitedly waved their fists under each other's noses.

Suddenly this life and noise ceased. From some corner Sophie de Montceyn had emerged. She stepped swiftly into the center of the throng and stood poised—

It seized Darragh in that instant what she was about to do. He plunged forward and laid a restraining hand upon her arm. "Stop!" he commanded. "You shall not do such a thing!"

The girl's gaze burnt into him. "An eye for an eye," she quoted. "A life for a life!"

Her eyes swiftly circled the company. The men drew in their breath sharply. It was something more than a mere woman that stood before them. In the religion of these artists she was a revelation—a glimpse of the eternal perfect to go down with men to their graves.

"Messieurs!" The girl addressed them tremblingly. "You are pleased to value me at a high price. Bérac," she looked over to the painter, "once said that I would be to any artist a mint of fame and gold. I announce to you, therefore, that I will give myself to the man who shall finish the work of Adolphe Miraud!"

The room stared, but uttered no word. The light in the girl's eyes, the tears upon her face throttled remark.

Darragh had quit the room. In the hall Sophie came upon him. His face was as white as chalk. She cast upon him a look of profound pity.

"You, too," she faltered, "have your chance."

"Chance for me!" he ejaculated bitterly. "You have wiped me out of existence!"

"But you are an artist."

"An artist! Oh, God!"

They confronted each other tensely. "Ah!" she breathed. "If there *were* a Sophie de Montceyn—"

Time passed. With a persistence that was torture Sophie still included Darragh in the lists. The names against which she contended he had a chance! With the light of the quest in her eye—that extraordinary quest of the new Miraud—she examined his pictures. The old puzzle of his situation was renewed in her.

Once she exclaimed: "You always paint *me*. That is like Miraud. Forever I sat for him. But he saw something more in me than he has portrayed—something different from his 'Mother Ocean,' his 'Angel of the Wind'—something he never brought to expression.

"He used to say he wished to hurl experiences into my life that he might watch the little shadows of them creep out in my face."

"He flung his own life across yours and made you his forever!" Darragh somberly declared.

The girl uttered a cry of despair. She flung herself at Darragh's feet and clung to him in an agony of appeal. "Buy me back!" she entreated. "Give me my life again! Oh, make me free!"

Darragh raised her in his arms. Her eyes looked into his and from secret doors flung suddenly open her woman's soul emerged to him.

"That this hostage you have sent to dwell with me may not be misused," he said, "I swear to work till I have freed us all—Miraud, you and me!"

The gods ask blood for the great things they give; Darragh grew to feel that he dipped his brush into his—that these creatures of his brain came into life clothed in the flesh they had taken from him. He experienced every phase of human despair. Sometimes he was so weary it seemed that nothing but death would ever rest him.

He fought and went down, rose and fought again, and still hope dangled her false bait before him. There were moments when the genius of Miraud soared as distant, as unattainable as a cloud above him, when he contemplated

it from the depths and gave up forever; there were other moments when he looked out upon it levelly and with understanding, and even rare greater seconds when he saw where even Miraud's eyes had not penetrated.

He lived like a hermit on his top floor among the roofs. He forgot the world, and was by it forgotten. Sophie slipped in sometimes, but retreated before this terrible trance of work; she sighed as she went.

When it seemed that he was utterly defeated, he took out the portrait of her. He had been a long time at work upon it, but still it never appeared finished. For hours with his head in his hands he pondered over the picture. What did it exhort? What, every time his eyes fell upon it, stirred, beckoned, urged him to seek, and still farther seek? He was like a traveler astray on the desert across which this face called: "Discover me and you are saved; miss me and you are lost forever."

He sat thinking of Sophie. The yearning for her, so long crowded down, welled into pain. He remembered that wonderful look she had given him. Worlds had seemed to pass into his possession. He had stood that moment at the pinnacle of life. His eyes turned to the portrait to meet that moment again. His soul called to it; but the face on the canvas gave forth no response.

He caught up his brushes and with a few inspired strokes traced that look across the eyes. Then he drew back to welcome her and as he looked the walls of his perplexity parted in a flash.

Dragging the easel hastily into a better light, he once more fell to work.

In one of those miraculous moods of creation he painted—and as the brush moved across the canvas this picture passed in to something that will be remembered as long as men breathe.

Its enigma will never end. What odd recognition thrills in you as you gaze? *Whose* or *what* is that face looking out from the shadowy cowl of hair? One *you* have ever seen or have ever known? Something deeper in you than intelligence, older in you than speech, responds. They exchange signals—this deep down knowledge and this pictured thing, whose message waves you feel but cannot interpret as they pass across you.

A kind of pain comes to you as you look. You ache to tears as you gaze into this face. You would like to follow it forever. You decide that you will. Then you awake. It is only a picture—a painted thing to which all sorts of names have been given. "The Hebrew Seer," "The Angel of Life," "The Unknown"—but you know—ah, how well you know—its name is none of these.

Darragh stood a long time after he had finished, silently confronting it. The picture could not, somehow, seem *his* work. It might have existed forever, have been more than merely one man's handiwork.

Sophie crept softly into the studio as he stood thus. He did not move, and the girl, after one long, silent look during which she did not once take breath, sank before the picture upon her knees.

"You—wherever you are," she whispered into the moving shadows of the dusk—"be glad!"



FAINT flattery never won fair lady.



THE rich "lady killer" comes in like a lion, but goes out like a shorn lamb.

THE WAYS OF THE WORLD

By STUART B. STONE

BEACON STREET—A Boston thoroughfare lined with gray matter. Literary lights on all corners.

FIFTH AVENUE—A boulevard ornamented with the piles of the Western millionaires.

BROADWAY—The (B)Izzy-est thoroughfare in the world.

PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE—Where lightning never strikes the third time.

STATE STREET—A Chicago labyrinth whose crowded mazes exit only into the morgue and the emergency hospitals.

BOWERY—The smellway of all nations.

WALL STREET—Where the lambs are led to the slaughter.

ATLANTIC CITY BOARDWALK—Where the calves are led to the water.

RUE DE LA PAIX—The breeding ground of the smugglococcus.

FLEET STREET—'Ome of the h'extry.

DOWNING STREET—A good place to hatpin a Premier.

NEVSKY PROSPECT—A target range for Czars.

THE WAY OF TRANSGRESSION—The hardest road mentioned in Scripture.

STRAIGHT AND NARROW WAY—A celestial approach rarely overcrowded.

PRIMROSE PATH—The speedway of youth.

THE ACTRESS*

By FRANZ MOLNAR AND JOSEPH TELEKI

CHARACTERS

AN ACTRESS

A LADY CALLER

TIME: *The present.*

PLACE: *The Actress's apartment.*

The lady is discovered seated in the drawing-room, waiting to see the actress.

ACTRESS

You wish to see me?

LADY

Yes.

ACTRESS

What can I do for you?

LADY

Give me back my husband! (*Suddenly she grasps the hand of the actress, kisses it and bursts into tears.*)

ACTRESS

Give you—give you back—your husband!

LADY

Yes.

(*ACTRESS reflects, as if trying to remember.*)

LADY

You wonder who my husband is? My husband is the short fair man who wears glasses; he is Alfred Long, the theatrical agent.

ACTRESS

I know him.

LADY

I know you do. Give him back to me!

(*There is a long silence.*)

ACTRESS (*as if embarrassed*)

I don't know what to say—I really don't know what you mean. How can I give you back your husband if I have not taken him?

LADY

But you say that you know him!

ACTRESS

But that does not mean that I have appropriated him. I know him—he got me the engagement at the theater, and I have also seen him on the stage several times. He is a nice fellow—fair hair—you say he wears glasses?

LADY

Yes, he does.

ACTRESS

I never saw him wear them.

LADY

Because he doesn't put them on when you see him. Because he loves you! When he is with me he wears glasses, because he doesn't care what he looks like—he doesn't love me! Give him back to me, dear Miss Ashley!

ACTRESS

If you weren't such a little dear I should feel inclined to be rude to you now, my child. What makes you think that I have robbed you of your husband?

* All performing rights reserved.

THE ACTRESS

LADY

He has sent you flowers.

ACTRESS

It isn't true!

LADY

What?

ACTRESS

It is false! I've never had one single flower from him! Has he told you, perhaps, that he sent me flowers?

LADY

He has not only told me, but I made inquiries at the florist's, and ascertained that he had sent you flowers.

ACTRESS

It's a lie!

LADY

You don't mean to say that I am telling you a lie!

ACTRESS

No; he lies.

LADY

And what about this letter? (*She produces a letter.*)

ACTRESS

Well, what about it?

LADY

It is addressed to you.

ACTRESS

What do you say? It's not even a letter from me to him? And it is addressed to me? Show it to me.

LADY

I will read it to you. (*She reads.*) "My dear Elsie, I am unable to come to the theater today, so I am sending you by letter a thousand kisses."

ACTRESS

Preposterous!

LADY

When he left the house this morning he forgot the letter on the writing desk. I suppose he intended to take it with him, to send it to the theater to be placed on your table in the dressing room for you to find it when you arrived. But the stupid fellow forgot it at home, and I opened it. (*She weeps.*)

ACTRESS

Don't cry.

LADY

How can I help it? I feel most unhappy! You, a beautiful woman, a famous actress, rob a poor little woman of her husband! You might show some little sympathy for me, and why shouldn't you cry also? It is easy for you—you are playing the part of a society woman—you darken your eyebrows and paint your lips—you make your eyes shine—you use fine perfume—you wear smart dresses—you are clever—you sing and dance. Of course he falls in love with you! But what am I to do, wearing a cotton dress, showing my own mouth and my own eyebrows, in my own stupidity and my own simplicity? Surely, I cannot sing my love to him in verse. But you dazzle him. You are acting, and the stupid fellow attributes all the charm and cleverness to you, which is really the merit of the people who wrote the play. Of course, for all I know, you may be even more stupid than I am, but you cannot help saying clever things on the stage, because they are in your part. I have no authors to support me—how am I to dazzle him with nothing but my own stupid affection?

ACTRESS

It is a most interesting case.

LADY

Which?

ACTRESS

Yours.

LADY

Mine? And why?

ACTRESS

Because I've never had a single flower from your husband; he never wrote a line to me; I've never had any conversation with him except officially. Hasn't any coolness arisen between you and him at home in recent times?

LADY

Oh, yes.

ACTRESS

Did you marry each other for love?

LADY

I didn't have a penny.

ACTRESS

Then everything is all right. It isn't the first case with us actresses, and it won't be the last! Your husband plays this little comedy to make you jealous and keep your interest alive.

LADY

What do you say? This isn't the first case?

ACTRESS

There are hundreds—thousands. Ask any nice-looking actress. All marriages of men connected with the stage are made sweeter by this. Managers, secretaries, lawyers, authors, clerks, scene painters, conductors—all keep their wives' interest alive by involving us in their little intrigues. We actresses frequently are the means of keeping straight men who do not strictly belong to the profession, and whose business brings them into contact with the theater. The wives of those people are all afraid of us; they all vie with us; they dress because of us; they have their hair waved because of us, and they wear much more conspicuous hats than we do.

LADY

Indeed! You really mean it?

ACTRESS

Of course I do. Those poor, simple middle class women feel that their husbands live in an atmosphere full of temptation, where they see much more fascinating women than they are themselves. Flirting is more common, conversation more unreserved; but this is only exaggerated, enhanced womanliness. One actress is a hundred women rolled into one. This perplexes you people. Look at those wives of actors, who come from non-theatrical families. They talk, behave and dress more freely than we do. They are afraid of us; they don't want to remain behind us. And your husband is a shrewd fellow—he has taken advantage of all this because he thought you didn't love him. He wrote a letter and intentionally left it for you to find. He ordered flowers, to make you think he is in love with me—and probably soon after cancelled the order. He hasn't a lock of my hair, has he?

LADY (*producing it*)

Hasn't he! I've got the locket here!

ACTRESS

Now, let me tell you, my dear. This is a lock of hair, of which they steal dozens from my dressing room. Even the hairdresser of the theater makes his wife jealous at home with one of them. And you would let him take you in like this?

LADY (*happily*)

What! You think it's all sham?

ACTRESS

I don't think—I'm sure! You didn't know yourself that as the wife of a theatrical agent you had to vie with us, so your husband hit upon this idea. I truly loathe those non-theatrical people, who have business with the theater, but I'm impressed by the cunning of such a non-professional as your husband, and it flatters my vanity that it should be possible to frighten through me even such a decent, nice little woman as you are. Your husband hasn't got a love letter from me, has he?

LADY (*frightened*)

He hasn't.

ACTRESS

Don't be frightened. I haven't written to him.

LADY

Well, then—

ACTRESS

But if he had come to me and said: "Dear Elsie, I want to regain my wife's love; I want you to do me the favor of writing me a nice love letter; I will drop it at home from my coat pocket"—I would have written him one with pleasure; and I may tell you that it would have been such a one that it would have made you cry for a fortnight if you had found it. I once wrote an author some ten such letters, at his request, but he had the bad luck of having a wife who was not curious, who, when she found the letters on the floor, always returned them to him unopened.

LADY

How clever you are! And how good you are!

ACTRESS

I am such as I am, no more beautiful, no better than any other attractive woman. I am a professional, so you non-professionals dread me a little, look upon me as a boggy, as a constant enemy and opponent.

LADY

I hope I have not offended you.

ACTRESS

No.

LADY

I suppose you think I'm silly.

ACTRESS

Yes, I do.

LADY

Have I been silly?

ACTRESS

No, you've been a woman, and you've acted like a woman. You haven't been silly. But now you look a little pathetic, with those eyes red with weeping and your contented face beaming with happiness. Now you are a little silly—not even Lohengrin should be loved so deeply as you love your golden-haired darling with his glasses. But this has nothing to do with me, has it?

LADY

No, of course not.

ACTRESS

And now you have obtained your object, you mustn't let him take you in again, no matter what you find in his pockets.

LADY

Indeed, I sha'n't.

ACTRESS

Not even if you find a dozen letters; not if he pockets my handkerchiefs; not if you catch him kissing my photograph; not even if you see him actually kiss me at the theater, because all this doesn't mean anything either. I'm angry with him a little, because if he compromised me, made use of me, he might at least have mentioned it to me. Now, to pay him out, I'm going to teach you how to avoid being taken in again. Let him continue to send flowers, to write letters, to wait for me in the evening at the theater, to come to rehearsal in the morning. Don't say anything to him. Laugh in your sleeve. Remember that it's all done for your sake.

LADY

I'm awfully obliged to you, Miss Ashley. You shall have one of my photographs.

ACTRESS

And I'll give you one of mine.

LADY (*moved*)

God bless you! Thank you, thank you ever so much!

ACTRESS

Don't begin to cry again.

LADY

But I'm so happy! (*She kisses her, weeping, and departs.*)
(*There is a pause.*)

ACTRESS (*opening the door of the adjoining room*)

You can come out—your wife's gone.

CURTAIN



MAY—Mad at him? Why, he wrote a lovely poem to her.

SADIE—Yes, but she never read it. When she saw the title of it she tore the whole thing up in a fit of anger. You see, he called it "Lines on Mabel's Face."

THE UNBELIEVER

By M. F. CARNEY

SHE paused by the open door, a hesitating figure, as one awaiting an uncertain welcome. But the lone occupant of the room, outstretched loosely in the leather chair, book in hand, read on. There was an uncommon grace in the chance pose of the intruder, and etched on the dim background, she seemed unreal, the semblance of a dream. Mere physical charm was hers by right of birth, and something more, something indefinable that lingered on the sensitive lips, filled the depths of the unwavering eyes, the calm of purity and faith ineffable.

She tapped on the door.

"May I come in?"

Langdon looked up from his book, nodded absently and resumed his reading.

"I am an ideal audience."

She laughed, and crossing the room, nestled on the rug at his feet. He tossed the book on the table, annoyance evident in the quick frown, but when she looked up the mood had passed.

"I doubt if you would appreciate my author," said Langdon indifferently.

"That may be premature on your part." Her retort was voiced pleasantly, but the effort to be gay failed in a false note, and this he noted.

"What is his message?"

Langdon looked long into the depths of those blue-gray eyes, ran his fingers through the waving mass of hair that unrolled within his hands, frankly admiring her with the egotism of one who, conscious of his good taste, had chosen well.

"The old message of life—love and beauty," he answered, "but in accord with our nature, in consonance with our impulses."

He kissed her cheek, but she was unresponsive. Something akin to sadness and pain dimmed her eyes.

"A new school," she murmured, slowly shaking her head. "Beauty is relative and love eternal. I should fear a new prophet, lest the old dreams die."

"You do not understand," he said. "I should not call him a prophet—just one who has brought us back to the truths of the older days when man was truly free."

"No, I do not understand," she said.

"You will some day," he insisted with slight emphasis. He read the doubt in her eyes and laughed. "Yes, you will, Aphrodite."

She turned her head, looking up at him with searching eyes.

"Why do you prefer that name to mine?"

"Because it is more appropriate. Aphrodite, to the older races, was the incarnation of beauty, the divine in feminine loveliness; perfect in all her charm, dominant in her alluring form, she ruled man and satisfied the senses." He paused. "As you do, dear."

He kissed her again, but she drew away from him. A flush tinged either cheek. "Is that why you love me?" The question was slowly given, as though to invite careful consideration.

"Yes; is it not sufficient?"

She was silent, looking into his face with eyes that doubted, questioned, probed, pleaded, stirring a resentment in him.

"Why don't you answer me?" His tone was petulant, almost harsh.

"Forgive me." She caught her breath. "I did not mean to offend you."

Her quiescence seemed to add to his irritation, and he drew her to him.

"It is nothing new, this discussion between us, and always it has ended at this point. I quite realize that your point of view is at variance with mine, but what you really think and feel I may only guess. I have tried to have you see, appreciate, grasp the true ideal of love, and I have waited long but in vain for your conversion. We were married at the altar of your God—this I did to please you; but all I saw that day was you: your glorious hair, that in imagination rippled within my hands; your eyes, unfathomed depths; your form, perfect even in its cloak of shimmering white. You were all I dreamed, and, strange anomaly in life, you were an ideal come true."

He paused; the anticipated interruption did not come. He went on:

"This religious mysticism in which you were enmeshed did not disturb me then, for I felt you were mentally ready to receive the truth, and I flattered myself that through your love I could lift the veil behind which you saw." He shook his head. "A year has passed and you still nurse your outworn creed; argument, facts, even entreaty, have been in vain. As I have often told you, this, all this, represents no bigotry on my part—at least, my mental training has given me breadth—but voices my earnest wish, longing if you will, to have you wholly mine, to have you realize that life is a succession of precious moments to be enjoyed fully, that love means the abandonment of self."

Her glance fell, the long lashes veiling her anxious eyes, and she seemed to shrink from the touch of his outstretched hand. He did not deem this of moment at the time, for, stirred by the vividness of his plea, he felt he had at last awoken a sympathetic chord in her.

"Now, take this author." He took the book from the table, opening to his place. "In my opinion he gets to the root of the matter. I will read you a pertinent passage, translating freely from the original. Above all things, endeavor to set aside your bias."

From her position she saw the back of the volume, with its title indented in letters of gold, "Mlle. De Maupin," and ever after she remembered that one cover had a dark stain, as though from ink. She knew nothing of the book or its author, Gautier, but resigned herself, a patient listener.

Then came the old doubts, stronger grown. Was this love for which he pleaded? Was this the love for which she had prayed? He had builded a shrine, had crowned her therein and offered incense kneeling at her feet. It had all been intoxicating at first, and for many days life seemed to her complete. The knowledge that he was not of her faith had only intensified her love, for it would be her one prayer, her triumph, to bring him into the light. After all, she was quite sure he believed in God. She had performed her religious duties as had been her wont from childhood, and as maturity of years came they had become more important in her life, proving an unfailing refuge and solace to her sensitive spirit. He had seemingly accepted this manifestation of her faith, but she recalled little incidents—trifling they appeared at the time—by which he sought to have her set aside or, at best, postpone the strict observance of some outward form symbolic of the faith within her: the suggestion of a Sunday excursion to start soon after dawn—she had laughed this aside; a proffered gift of pearls for the simple gold cross she wore suspended on a chain about her neck. He had quoted from his favorite authors, as he called them, and more openly, when she seemed indifferent, read them. They had all to do with life from a material point of view—this much, at least, she understood—more particularly with life from what he was pleased to term the natural, rational point of view.

She had been calm, patient, smothering in her heart the recurrent suggestion that he was waging a subtle war against her soul. In the tenacity with which she clung to her ideal of him, love unconsciously had been her mainstay, for in her simple faith he had come in answer to her prayers, and God does not err.

He called her by many endearing terms, his fancy finding adequate expression in the fervor of the Romance tongues. "*Carissima*" and "*chérie*," sounded well in the magic of his soft voice. But not once in her recollection had he called her by her baptismal name. Trivial and unnoted at first, the omission had assumed more importance as the days went by, until now it touched the quick of her spirit.

She had been so absorbed in her reverie that she was quite unconscious that Langdon had been reading aloud for some time. He moved in his chair to a position of more comfort, and with a start she turned to him, alert, unduly attentive, fearful lest he had read her thoughts. The book held him fast; he read on:

"The Christ has enveloped the whole world in his winding sheet. O purity, plant of bitterness, born on a blood-soaked soil and whose degenerate and sickly blossom expands with difficulty in the dank shade of cloisters, under a chill baptismal rain; rose without scent, and spiked all round with thorns, thou hast taken the place for us of the glad and gracious roses, bathed with nard and wine, of the dancing girls of Sybaris!

"The real fall of man was on the birthday of the babe of Bethlehem."

The imagery of the passage seemed somewhat obscure to her until this last, and here the heart of the author was bare. For a moment her blood ran chill at the profanation; her face paled in the intensity of her emotion. He had chosen this method to undermine her faith; had offered under thin guise coarse insult to his God; had deliberately scoffed at her. Her spirit wavered and all her being trembled in the struggle to preserve her ideal of him.

Langdon tossed the book on the table, and his gesture suggested the final argument; yet there was something forced in his attitude, as though he expected an attack. He looked at her narrowly.

"Strong, is it not?" he questioned.

It was perfect self-control that stifled the rising sob in her throat; it would be futile to let loose the storm now raging within her. She strove to rise, but he caught her in his arms.

"Be rational, *chérie*."

Then he saw that her eyes were closed and her lips trembling. For a moment his philosophy was at a loss. "Well?" he asked.

At the soft intonation she opened her eyes, and in that glance he saw only surprise. Deeper still lay wounded pride, tortured spirit, and over all, under all, sadness no tears could assuage.

"It is nothing, only my emotional nature, as you call it." She made a brave effort to smile; the failure was apparent. He noted this, and baffled by a reserve which seemed to him a stubborn refusal to enter into his appreciations, his irritation found quick expression.

"Your silence is most exasperating, and if you do speak your words are evasive. Tell me if you do not understand, and I will try to make things clearer; if you disagree, give me your point of view—then we may reason it out together."

Never before had he so placed her on the defensive, and she felt unutterably weak. A prayer for strength and guidance rose to her lips; her tongue was loosened and words came in a voice calm and clear.

"Does this author express your point of view?"

Langdon leaned back in his chair, complacent; he had waited long for this moment, and his answer had the easy assurance of the positivist. "The rational conclusion, yes."

"Of what?"

He smiled at her directness.

"The belief reached by me in common with those who enjoy the luxury of thinking."

"Then your conclusion is a belief? I am glad of that, dear, because mine also is a belief."

"But there is this fundamental difference: you believe through the unfortunate gift of inheritance, whereas my belief is deduced logically, that is, by reason."

"Reason!" she murmured, her chin cradled in one hand; her attitude was of one seeking to grasp the abstruse. Then she glanced at him in some trepidation.

"You see, I am only a woman, of

those who are generally considered rather deficient in mental process."

He smiled indulgently.

"Do you believe in purity of conduct?"

He nodded. "Yes—but to attain that, it is only necessary to obey the natural promptings in our being."

She pondered over this answer. "Then the murderer, the thief, the dissolute are pure." She spoke with an air of hesitation.

"They are degenerates," Langdon answered.

"But they obey natural promptings—that is, their inclinations," she persisted.

He was visibly annoyed. "Nevertheless, they are wrong—their beings are perverted, abnormal."

"Why?"

For a moment he was at a loss for an answer; the simplicity of her questions precluded platitudes. "The normal judgment of mankind decrees that they are." He was not quite satisfied with this, yet felt it would serve.

"Then the law of man says the immoral shall not have license to indulge in their natural promptings. Clearly, you do not agree with the law; to you it is irrational."

Langdon threw back his head and laughed, and underneath she caught the false note. He sought the effect of ridicule.

"Clever, *chérie*, but how absurd!"

Their glances met, and Langdon saw her countenance was calm and in her eyes was something of scorn that he should descend to such a paltry ruse. Then he felt he had been rather philosophical, that he had led her into deep water and left her to her own resources.

"I fear you don't understand—and perhaps this is due to the general way in which I have discussed the subject. Now you recall in that passage Gautier speaks of purity as 'a rose without scent.' Christ, in his interpretation of that term, bound human nature in iron bands, made purity something difficult of attainment, an impossible abstraction, beautiful as a wax flower is beau-

tiful, but like a food that is tasteless, like a rose without scent.

"Look at life from the natural side, for its own sake. We are organisms finely tuned, with highly developed senses which crave expression, and within us are well springs of emotion that seek outlet in the sea we call life."

Langdon paused to note the effect, but she gave no sign; she seemed an impassive listener. So he continued, his tone more earnest.

"Is it not more reasonable to obey the call of our nature, to enjoy the gifts we have, rather than to live in constant self-abnegation, at war with ourselves and the world about us?"

It was some moments before she spoke, and he felt his patience slipping away. Then she turned to gaze at him, as though seeking that within him which he had left unsaid, and he was strangely moved.

"I think I understand now. You do not believe in the soul; you deny God." He could never know what this cost her. She bowed her head, and running her fingers along the chain about her neck, lifted gently the golden cross till it glowed in the soft light.

"And so you never called my name, for she, too, who bore the Christ was Mary."

She slipped from his embrace and he made no effort to restrain her. So standing before him she waited for a word, an expression, anything so that it come from his heart. Langdon sat silent, obdurate.

"I understand, dear," she whispered, and slowly groped her way to the open door, for blinding tears hid the room and she felt faint. At the door she steadied herself and looked back. He had not changed his position, but sat looking out the window into the blackness of the night. And in his face was anger, wounded pride, bitterness. Long she waited, the prey of many emotions, but in the end love remained alone, dominant. "Forgive me," she said.

Langdon ignored her and sat perverse, unmoved, nursing his resentment.

She turned into the subdued light of the great hall and with bowed head

slowly ascended the stair with reluctant feet, pausing to hear, sensitive ears alert. The silence was unbroken. In the rush of emotion these thoughts engendered a cry came from her heart, to be stifled by a supreme effort and float down to him, the breath of a sigh. She heard him move, and, fearful of she knew not what, mounted hurriedly to the top of the stair and sped down the dark hall to the door of her room. The moonlight, a broad silver stream, threw into sharp relief the minor detail, bathing in softened tones the sculptured Christ on the crucifix. For a moment her glance rested on the drooping figure, then her spirit wavered, something within her seemed to overflow, and sinking to her knees at the foot of the high bed she gave way to her grief.

Langdon, an unbending figure, wrapped in his discontent, recalled all he had said. He found nothing that he could censure—she was clearly at fault; failure to grasp a subject, that was easily forgiven, but she was fundamentally antagonistic and, most irritating of all, the fault was in her faith, her religious sense of security. He felt he had been a superior lover, a considerate husband. The things the world prized, wealth, social prestige, good-fellowship, these had been his by right of birth, and from the day of their marriage they had been hers. Her beauty had enthralled him, and this was in consonance with his life. Then, too, she evidenced such keen perception, a mental training far above the ordinary; was self-contained, but—yes, it was her physical charm that had brought him to her feet. How superb she was! His friends, fellow spirits in what they were pleased to term the "Renaissance of Nature," had suggested courteously that she was "ultra religious," and that while such beauty was alluring, it could be appreciated only where there existed a unity of natures and a subordination of all things to the emotions. This they intimated would be impossible in her case, for her creed would be paramount. All this he had laughed aside, for he was confident of her love and doubted not he could mold her to his fancy. What was

this faith in a God, in a future state, which held her so blindly? Stripped of this, what remained of religion? Yes, faith was the crucible, and from it, like a cloud obscuring the senses, rose terrifying ghosts that held the spirit in leash, made a virtue of self-restraint and withered the best in life.

For the first time she had met him openly, had solicited a discussion, but it was a defiance; she had tried to trap him, and in the recollection there was a sting. He felt she had flouted him. Again he saw her lift the cross into the light. A wave of anger swept over him. It was the Christ who had come between them. He turned sharply toward the open door and leaned forward, tense, listening. A faint sound like the echo of a sigh came to him. Was she unhappy? It was the Christ had made her so, and in his heart a wild jealousy raged. Undoubtedly she had stolen away to pray to Him.

He tiptoed to the hall, up the long stair and down the corridor to her room. The door was open, and in the mystic moonlight he saw her kneeling, her hands clasped in prayer, before the silver crucifix on the wall.

At that vision the last strand of his self-control broke; he rushed into the room. Startled, she half rose but sank back, quaking in every nerve. His face was distorted in the fury of his passion, and she cried out. A moment and he had torn the crucifix from the wall, and with an imprecation had hurled it crashing through the window. The moonlight flared on the silver form as it sped, a tiny meteor in the void, and to her ears, keenly alert, there came back a sound that passed like the sigh of one dying, then silence, so prolonged it seemed articulate.

She buried her face in her hands, not daring to look at him again. The minutes passed, tense, an eternity. She heard him gasp and from the depths of the house the sound of hurrying feet, then the door was closed and she knew he had gone. Wave after wave of emotion swept her heart bare, and in the ebb despair crept in, a fearful specter.

Langdon closed the door softly and in

his being reason struggled for the mastery. He had roused the servants; into his mind there flashed a dozen plausible explanations.

Halfway down the dim hall he met Faulkner, his butler, a portly man who waddled, a puffing, grotesque figure, and behind him, at a discreet distance, stepped softly several of the house servants.

Langdon paused—his countenance was serene—and expressed surprise at their appearance.

Faulkner came to an abrupt stop and labored ineffectually to recover his dignity. "I beg your pardon, sir, but—but I heard a—a shot, sir."

Langdon looked him over with composure and waited a moment that his answer might carry full effect.

"A window fell—breaking the glass; it is nothing serious."

Faulkner bowed. "Very good, sir. I beg your pardon, sir. We were that nervous—" and bowing low he withdrew, dispersing his aides with something of his wonted dignity.

Langdon stood there; the echo of the retreating steps died away, yet he did not move.

"It is nothing serious," he muttered grimly.

He descended to the hall, passed into the library and turned out the lights, then sank into the great chair by the window, an indefinite shape in the gloom. And Faulkner, making his last round, paused at the darkened door and passed on his way wondering.

But Langdon held his peace through the night watches, and the dawn, flushing across the sky, found him there staring at the fading stars.

II

THE sunlight, a broad stream of radiance, flooded her room, gently touched the kneeling figure, shimmered in the dark mass of her disheveled hair. With a start she awoke. Her body was cramped and chill. She looked about her, wondering at the bed undisturbed, saw the ragged edges of the broken window pane—and memory

with pitiless wand revived each detail of the night. It was real and not the vivid mirage of a dream, and in this consciousness she shivered. She felt anew the agony of the open wound in her heart, but in her eyes there were no tears. And he, her husband, had done this. She struggled with this inconsistency, striving to save some vestige in the wreck of her little world, and from the prayers which rose unvoiced from the depths of her being, strength and courage entered her doubting soul. She would be brave, suffer all things and trust in God, but, like a clouded vale, the coming days loomed vague, uncertain, drear. There came a knock at the door. Terrified, she rose, trembling, unnerved. Had he come to offer her fresh insult?

"*Madame, c'est moi.*"

At the sound of the subdued voice she rushed to the door; here was sympathy. In that instant came realization of the situation, the bed undisturbed—she was still in evening dress. No, not even her maid should know.

"I will ring, Annette."

Reluctantly she waited until the sound of the departing steps ceased, then turned quickly, rumped the pillows, turned back the counterpane, loosened her luxuriant hair, not daring to look in the long mirror, attired herself carefully as though she had just risen.

Her fascinated eyes were drawn to the wall where the crucifix had hung, and she winced as from a blow. How strange the impulse that had brought this outrage! And Langdon, had he slept, justified? Recollections of other days came involuntarily, days when he seemed to possess all things that her heart valued, all save one, and she had prayed fervently that this, too, might be given him. Was this her answer? No; God deemed her unworthy. He permitted this affront that she might learn the lesson of patience—yet what had she done? Was she to be despised because she believed in God and worshiped Him according to her faith? This was too absurd. Loneliness, keenly oppressive, seized her, and crossing the room she pressed the button by the *escritoire*.

A moment later the maid entered. Her mistress affected her accustomed morning pleasantries, a gaiety unfelt, seeking to divert the solicitous inquiries she felt her appearance must warrant. But Annette's quizzical glance noted only the broken pane.

"So, it was madame's window?"

Her heart raced; it seemed as though the power of speech were gone. Annette became voluble.

"Monsieur, he said, 'A window fall'—*mais* Faulkner, he pouf—pouf." She giggled at the recollection. "'A shot, monsieur?' 'Non,' monsieur answer; 'eet is nothing *serieux*.' Oh, madame, I laugh at Faulkner; *c'est très ridicule*."

Seated before the mirror, while the maid's deft fingers fashioned the coiffure, she deduced the facts. Evidently the crash had roused the servants, and Langdon had disarmed suspicion. It was nothing serious, he had told them. Nothing serious? No—not to him. Annette's merriment jangled in her ears and the burning flush mounted in her cheeks. She said nothing, and the maid, catching the reflection of lowered eyes and compressed lips, checked her laughter, lapsing into embarrassed silence.

In the gray half-light that heralds dawn Langdon rose from his chair, went to his room, changed his attire for a riding costume and quietly left the house. He roused the stables, called for his favorite hunter and rode forth down the broad drive beneath the overarching elm trees. To the wondering, half-awakened groom he left no word, but Faulkner, who slept lightly on the borderland of dreams, was awakened by the horse's champing, and saw the dim mounted figure an instant before it was swallowed in the gloom.

"My word!" he gasped.

The silent horseman took the main road to the north. He felt the tang of the autumn breeze blowing over the downs and scented the fresh fragrance of the earth. He was tired, mentally weary, and his thoughts drifted with each new current. Pride, self-justification, had superseded anger, striving with specious pleas to defend his action, and a hundred times he stood convicted be-

fore the bar of honor. He had violated the code of a gentleman, had openly given the lie to his own theory of right conduct; and in the ruins of the temple he stood naked and ashamed.

Throughout it was the personal note that dominated his thoughts. He was concerned only with this blemish on his conduct. What she thought, felt, suffered, was remote, extraneous, not that it was immaterial, but he was a prisoner in the rotary cage of self.

He looked up, conscious for the first time that the sun was up in a cloudless sky, stirring the earth, touching with soft warm fingers dew-laden leaf and tendril; the mists rolled away and from a tall pine by the roadside a thrush sang. The natural buoyancy of youth quickened his blood; captive to the magic of a perfect day, he gazed across the glistening fields with appreciative eye. He, too, was a vital part of nature. There was something in this north country that satisfied his artistic sense; he often wondered so few sought residence here. To be sure the age was commercial and men's imagination dormant, but all were not blind. In his enthusiasm he had made several converts who like himself were fortunate in worldly goods, and jealous of their discovery, they had bought up the land for miles lest some unworthy intruder should mar the scene.

Langdon rode on with loose hanging rein, a solitary figure in the landscape. He had no definite goal; to be alone this day, that was all, and the rest did not matter.

Suddenly his horse shied, with rolling eyes and tense ears. He turned in his saddle. A man, ragged, unkempt, shoeless, was picking his way down to the road over the loose stone wall. Langdon reined in his quivering mount. A tramp was not an uncommon sight, but never had he seen such destitution. The other had reached the road and stood for a moment gazing down at his feet, and as he watched Langdon saw tiny streams of blood thread their way between the grimy toes. The man looked up, meeting his gaze with tired eyes, gray depths of despair. Aversion to the unclean made Langdon uncomfortable.

He pressed his knees to his horse's sides, then suddenly checked the animal with firm hand, drew some pieces of silver from his jacket pocket and tossed them into the dust at the man's feet. As he gave loose rein the outcast spoke.

"May Christ go with you!"

The horse, restive, bounded forward, and Langdon had no time to voice his irritation. Was this the way his day was to begin? His largesse was but the expression of common humanity, and yet the only form in which this vagrant could show his gratitude was an invocation to the Christ. Were high and low to join in a conspiracy that a name might be his obsession? Could he not have one day free? Evidently the man was sincere, and this was most irritating of all. The night came back to him, and he lived again each moment of the long hours. He bared his head, leaned forward, spoke softly in the sensitive ears, and the long reach of his hunter's stride increased; the breeze tossed his hair, whirring by in monotone; the clattering pebbles fell from the powerful hoofs, and in the rush he felt the thrill in quickening pulse and tingling cheek. It was worth while to be alive and unrestrained.

The road grew rough and the cultivated fields with their familiar landmarks disappeared. He drew rein, bringing his horse to a walk. This was a new, wild country, the luxuriant undergrowth encroaching on the narrow path; the branches, interlaced, bowed low in the freshening breeze, so low he could touch them with his riding crop as he passed, and the sunlight made fantastic shifting patterns at every step.

His way wound up a steep hill, wooded on either side, until he emerged at the top on a broad clearing, commanding an unimpeded view. Langdon dismounted and tied his horse to a roadside sapling, then, seating himself on a rock on the brow of the slope, he felt his spirit soar.

The last of the misty canopy now floated from the valley; clean cut, the trees, far away on rugged knolls, swayed in unison; the long grass, a glittering sheen, waved and rippled in murmuring

chorus; the fitful breeze showered down the dying leaves that sailed away, tiny particles of red and gold and brown. His being drank deep from this clear well of nature, and in the delight that came there was a touch of awe, a subtle touch, subconscious, that seemed to stunt self and leave his spirit like a caged bird beating against the bars. This was beyond analysis, he knew, but it drew his eyes to the blue bowl of the heavens, and he sat there wondering as a child wonders when first it sees the stars.

The sound of creaking leather, of hoofbeats, broke the stillness, and from the north another horseman slowly appeared, pausing on the summit to breathe his horse. The rider looked out across the valley; then his eyes rested on the silent figure in the foreground. A smile of recognition softened the lines of his face.

"Good morning, my philosopher," he said.

Langdon turned sharply to stare at this intruder. "Good morning." His tone was curt. He was in no mood for idle talk, and chafed under the intimation of prolonged conversation. Then, too, he had no liking for young Garrett O'Donnell, whose wild escapades and flippant tongue had made him unduly prominent. The son of a gifted *littérateur*, he had grown up unchecked, idolized, pampered, inheriting the wit, brilliancy and passion of the Celt; the leader in every college scrape, he took his doctor's degree at the university the youngest man in his class. To Langdon he was lacking in appreciation, failed miserably in comprehension and treated life as a jest.

The horseman threw back his head and laughed, a deep, hearty laugh. "Pardon, gentle sir. In you I see the quality of mercy is strained, yet philosophy beggars courtesy. Would you have me stand out of your sunlight?"

Langdon's blood rose at this banter, but he remained silent. The rider dismounted and his horse wandered along the slope, browsing on the short grass. O'Donnell walked across and threw himself on the ground by Langdon's side.

"Come, man, who could be out of joint with such a world?" His gesture was significant. "But we are such petty creatures, arrogant quibblers, who nurse our follies, blind in a world of light." He smiled. "You are the first human being I have laid eyes on these two hours past. My blood quickened, for, after all, man is gregarious, so I greeted you with enthusiasm. 'Good morning,' said I; you turned a cold, unwelcome face."

Langdon, an unwilling listener, marveled at this temerity; he glanced at the outstretched, graceful figure. O'Donnell looked up, a whimsical twinkle in his eyes.

"I don't know why—fancy it would have been the same had the devil himself accosted you."

It was impossible to withstand his good-natured railery, and a ghost of a smile flitted across the listener's face.

"You are quite right, Garrett; I wanted to be alone today; pardon my incivility." He spoke frankly, and the listener moved as though to rise.

"What golden thoughts are here lost—"

Langdon put out a restraining hand. "I am not in a frivolous mood," said he.

"I am serious as an owl," came the retort, but the smiling face belied the words. Langdon sat with loosely clasped hands, looking out across the valley. "Beautiful, isn't it?" he murmured.

"Nature." The answer was laconic.

"Yes, but is that all? If so, it should suffice, satisfy our being. Does it? I have sat here under a spell. At first the esthetic within me thrilled and I felt something akin to pain, then I worshiped Nature. She was the answer to it all, the breathing trees, the harmony of radiant fields, the winged playfellows of the air, whirring, joyous life, and I was her highest expression; but somehow there was no egotism in the thought. There welled up within me, like an aftermath of something long forgotten, an intimation—I know no more definite way to put it—an elusive specter that overwhelmed all else, leaving me uncertain, indeterminate, killing self, and I looked up at the sky in awe of that

I knew not. Were I of those who believe blindly, I presume I would ascribe this to a God." His brow contracted and the fingers of his hands clasped and unclasped. "That is absurd in my hypothesis. Life is free, and in its very unrestraint lies all that is beautiful, for beauty is the expression of our emotions, the perfect form of our desires. And all the gods of all the creeds deny this. What is the answer?"

Langdon turned looking down at the well knit figure. He was inwardly surprised that he should speak in this vein to one who he felt had no interest, no appreciation for such introspection. A swift change had stolen the good humor from his companion's eyes, and in its place was an expression, grim, yet reminiscent of sadness. O'Donnell was silent, abstracted, and some moments passed before he spoke.

"Have you ever seen the destruction wrought by an earthquake?" His question seemed irrelevant, and the other wondered.

"No."

"Imagine, if you can, this valley torn, trees uprooted, the grass, sod, a dead mass, the earth's vitals bare, exhaling vile odors, the hills twisted, the living things silent, the sun darkened in a pall of desolation; would it be beautiful?"

"How is that pertinent?" said Langdon.

"Is it not Nature?"

"Changing her expression." This was fencing.

"Yet an expression. Would it gratify, satisfy your sense of the beautiful?"

"No." The answer was cautiously given. "But that might be because I did not understand."

"Why?" O'Donnell followed close.

"Life better appreciates life; death is a veil."

"Therein lies the crux, Langdon. Nature unrestrained means death, chaos. Nature restrained, obeying the law, brings in her train life, order, beauty." He paused expecting an interruption that did not come.

"And so," he went on, "it is with man. Once he was unrestrained, and borne on the flood of his emotions, as

you term them, sank below the level of the beast. Did he find beauty then?"

Langdon waved a deprecating gesture. "Then he was abnormal," he said.

"Abnormal? Was that a cause or an effect?" It was the Celt in him bubbling over, and his eyes danced. Langdon frowned, and rising, walked across the slope to his tethered animal.

O'Donnell rolled over on the grass and watched him for a moment in silence; then he shook his head and whistled, a shrill call. At the sound his horse neighed, head uplifted, ears alert, and trotted to his side. A soft pat on the finely arched neck and he went into the saddle without touching the stirrup. As he reached the road his companion, mounted, turned toward the north, holding the impatient horse with tight rein.

"Adieu, my philosopher," said O'Donnell, and he met the quick searching gaze with one imperturbable, serene—one never knew just how to interpret that serenity.

"You play with words, Garret, as a child with blocks—" the voice was evidence of a ruffled temper—"and ere your little house is complete you knock it down with shouts of glee, just like a child."

O'Donnell bowed over the pommel in mock courtesy.

"For of such are the Kingdom of Heaven," said he with gravity. The other laughed, a weak effort, for it was stifled by some stronger emotion.

"You quote the Christ; are you, too, His slave?" The bitter tone amazed the younger man and he sat silent. And as Langdon looked he saw that the other's face was heavily lined, and that in those eyes, looking out to the hills, the sadness of buried dreams rose again.

"No," he said, "but I have been a slave to another all my life; he has been a tyrant, taking all and giving nothing."

"That is interesting. You arouse curiosity. Who is this monster?"

"Garrett O'Donnell. He has lived your creed, seeking the beautiful in unrestrained desire. What has it brought him—satisfaction, content, achievement?" He shook his head. "No,

none of these. Ill repute, scorn without—insatiable thirst within. Now criticism provokes his mirth; it is the bauble of fools. A ready smile, a flippant tongue are his only credentials, and with these he has passed through every gate—all but one. There they have questioned him and he had no answer. He marveled at the peace in the faces of his questioners and asked the secret." Lost in wonderment at this strange self-analysis, Langdon was silent. O'Donnell looked long over the valley.

"And they have brought him a cross of wood, whereon was the figure of a man nailed."

Langdon controlled himself with an effort.

"And they said: 'This is the Christ. In Him and by Him we live.'"

The listener laughed, contemptuous. "Another Bunyan come to judgment."

But the other seemed not to notice. "You call it slavery. Then that is one I never knew. It may be I will try it some day."

A quick turn on the rein, a word low spoken, and his horse leaped forward, clattering down the hill to the south. Langdon, looking after, waited in vain for a wave of farewell.

Then he slowly took the other road, struggling with this new riddle. Here was a man who denied himself nothing, the antithesis of every religious ideal, yet he was giving serious consideration to a doctrine that struck at the roots of that which had ruled his life. If he were abnormal, it was not evident. He had spoken of the cross of Christ, and at the recollection Langdon swore aloud. Twice in this morning had that name been thrust on him. It was enough, and he would have no more. There was something farcical about it, he thought, something extravagant in each scene—the outcast in the road, the gentleman dilettante in his saddle.

He looked up and saw in the distance scattered cottages, low-gabled, the outposts of a village. The sun was over his head, and he recalled he had eaten nothing all day. Hunger possessed him, and he urged his hunter forward over the tortuous road.

The highway widened; the stone walks showed some care, and here and there in the fields cultivation in rustic simplicity appeared; the wholesome scent of hay permeated the air; the vines of the wild grape ran riot in the undergrowth, and myriad-voiced the hum of the earth rose quavering. Faint in the distance he heard the ring of hammer on anvil; his horse stumbled at a turn in the road, casting a shoe, and as he glanced ahead, the low-roofed shop of the smithy with its swinging signpost caught his eye. Langdon smiled at the lucky chance. He swung to the ground opposite the open door and led his horse up the tanbark incline.

The burly figure at the bellows did not turn, and in the glare of the sputtering fire he noted the swelling muscles of the man's forearm, the veins that corded the bull throat, the glistening skin. The man looked up from his work.

Langdon nodded pleasantly.

"*Bon jour*," the man answered, and, stooping, examined the unprotected hoof. Langdon inquired where the Inn was located and the blacksmith, leading the way to the road, pointed out a quaint stone house beneath an oak whose branches, enmeshed in the trailing vines from gable and roof, cast shifting shadows across the lawn. He turned with a smile of thanks, and in that instant saw tattooed on the man's broad chest, where the shirt rolled back generously, a cross. He paused and stared. A feeling of helplessness came over him; it seemed the more he sought to avoid that sign, the more it pursued. It was more than fortuitous.

The man made no comment but turned and disappeared in his shop. And Langdon walked away, wondering.

The Inn nestled on a hummock, well in from the road, a path bordered by sumach guiding the guest to the fantastic portico, where trailing vines, over-running the columns, reached out in clinging spirals to intercept him. He paused a moment, his hand on the brass knocker. A loud burst of laughter came from within and a voice raised in song. Suddenly the door opened, and bowing low, a short man of gen-

erous girth greeted him in broken English.

He entered and saw he was in the café, a low-studded room, bare save for several wooden tables arranged haphazard. At one by the east window sat three men and a woman. The table bore evidence of the dinner just ended, and before each guest was a liqueur that gleamed in the sunlight. The men were still laughing, and Langdon's entrance passed unnoticed. One of them was singing, his easy, jocular manner and high tenor holding the intruder's attention.

Langdon walked across and seated himself at the table by the opposite window. The host followed obsequiously, noting the riding crop and leather puttees; here was a customer worth while.

"*Quel vin monsieur désire-t-il?*"

The old lines from Thackeray's ballad came to Langdon as he looked up. "The Chamberlain with yellow seal," he said.

The man shrugged his shoulders. "This ees not Paris."

"True, mine host; it was a jest; your best will suffice." And as the rotund figure waddled out through the swinging doors in the rear Langdon examined the merry-makers.

The men were well groomed, common types of the city's more fortunate class, careless of manner, self-sufficient, seekers of pleasure wherever fancy called; the woman's face was averted, and he noted that her hands were soft, white, with the delicate fingers of the artist. The singer, leaning over the table, was acting as he sang the words of a ribald *chanson*. It was not quite clear to Langdon whether they were entirely sober, for the song lacked wit and was frankly coarse. But ever his glance returned to the soft white hands. He hoped she would turn her head. She seemed wholly indifferent, looking out the window up the long road.

His host set the meal before him with a flourish, filled the glass from the dust-coated bottle and fussed about, puffing incessantly. Langdon ate leisurely, amused at the man's gyrations;

the cause of his anxiety was evident. With a feigned critical air he finally raised the glass of wine and held it close to the window, nodding in approbation at the golden rays. Then he turned with a smile to the bobbing figure.

"*A votre santé*," he said, and slowly drained the glass.

The wine was excellent, and he glanced up in genuine surprise. "Remarkable!"

"Ah! Monsieur ees the connoisseur."

"And the vintage?" He refilled the glass carefully.

"*Mon frère*, he give eet me. It ees from Italia." He paused, wrinkling his forehead. Suddenly he snapped his fingers. "*Voilà! 'Lachryma Christi'*, they call it."

Langdon quickly replaced the glass on the table. "*Lachryma Christi*—the tears of Christ!" He saw only the absurdity of the situation and laughed aloud to the astonishment of his host.

"Tears of Christ"—what subtlety, and to me! *Prosit*, mine host!" he said, and drank.

But the innkeeper shrugged his shoulders and shambled from the room. Clearly this guest was quite mad. "*Cochon*," he muttered, as he slammed the door. The group at the other table turned. The woman leaned forward, her chin cradled in one white palm, the tapering forearm resting lightly on the table. Langdon looked into her face and found it beautiful. And another face with pleading eyes rose before him, but this passed. He saw only the woman's eyes mocking him. The singer rose and crossed the room. He bowed low before Langdon.

"I am a herald from Bohemia. Will you journey there?"

The accent was foreign, the suavity Italian. Langdon hesitated. He had sought solitude this day in vain, and the unrest underlying each changing mood bared thoughts he strove to forget. These people were not of his world, but at least he would be free of religious cant; and the woman—she was well worth a few moments' diversion.

"An unworthy wayfarer, so in your

charity bear with me." And together they joined the three.

"An advocate," said his companion, indicating one with a nod, "learned in the law, written, unwritten and otherwise." The man with the long nose smiled.

"Here, the artist," he tapped the other lightly, "dreamer of dreams, yet wedded to Nature; he worships her." Langdon unbent, returning the man's nod, and then his eyes lifted slowly to the shapely head of the woman.

"The huntress." The introducer spoke with feigned gravity. "She tarries with us this day." The woman alone was amused, and she looked at the guest through drooping eyelids.

"And you?" questioned Langdon.

"A seeker after truth," answered the singer. His companions laughed spontaneously, and in the outburst Langdon unconsciously drew a chair to the woman's side and sat down.

The swinging door creaked and their host entered, refilling the glasses.

The woman leaned toward this self-possessed guest, whose manner was, after all, rather superior. "And you?" she questioned.

Langdon turned; apparently there was only interest, a polite quizzical interest, in his glance, but in that instant she saw something master his calm, flare in his eyes and pass. And the woman smiled. "I am an unbeliever," said Langdon quietly.

"Another prophet," ventured the man with the long nose.

"Here's to his revelation!" chanted the singer, and the three glasses rang as they clinked. Langdon raised his glass to his lips and bowed.

"I claim no inspiration, gentlemen," he said; "and as men understand it I have no creed."

"Ah, the realities!" interjected the artist. The sarcasm was not lost, and the unbeliever coolly measured this antagonist.

"Quite so; the realities of life alone are true."

"It sounds familiar," laughed the singer, reaching for the bottle; "doesn't it, Diana?"

"What are the realities?" she questioned Langdon.

"What the eyes see, the fingers touch, the ears hear, all that the senses know."

The artist looked past him at the woman, and his eyes glowed. But she was concerned only with their guest. "Which is most satisfying?" she urged.

Langdon turned, drawn irresistibly. His pulse quickened. There was a pause.

"What the eyes see," he said, and, raising his glass, drank. The "huntress" smiled and drained her glass.

"Rather neat, that," drawled the man with the long nose.

"I call it subtle," bantered the singer.

The artist said nothing, but stared at Langdon with ill concealed dislike. The latter returned the man's glance with one of calm superiority. Clearly this one was a fool who followed in her train and paraded his jealousy. This added zest to the episode, for undeniably the woman was beautiful. Evidently she was responsive, and there was that in her eyes which lured him. He wondered why he should hesitate.

So he dismissed the artist from his thoughts and admired her boldly. They entered into the conversation, that ran in light sparkling vein, and though he seldom addressed her he knew their pulses beat in unison, their beings swam in a swift undercurrent that narrowed irresistibly. He ordered wine and more wine; the singer sang his praises in halting verse, and the artist drank, refilled his glass and drank again in moody silence. The man with the long nose fell into a semi-stupor, leering at them ironically. Langdon had drunk sparingly, but his blood was on fire, and ever the woman drew nearer. The singer struggled to his feet, waving an accusing finger.

"Diana, the huntress." His laugh broke in a hiccough; the glass fell from the uncertain hand, a tinkling clash on the floor. For an instant disgust rose in Langdon; the woman laughed, a mellifluous, natural laugh, and the feeling passed. The innkeeper hurriedly pushed open the door, only to shrug his

shoulders and disappear. There were many bottles on the table, and the gentlemen had long purses. The singer supported himself by the table and addressed the silent figure of the artist.

"Farewell, O dream—dreamer—f'well to all yo' great-ness! Behol' the rev'lution!" He collapsed in his chair, a mumbling, snickering incoherency.

The artist half rose, with knotted hands; the veins in his forehead swelled, and for a moment it seemed to Langdon he would leap at the man, but the wine smothered the effort and he fell back. Trembling in every fiber of his being, Langdon looked into the woman's face pressed close to his; he inhaled the warm breath stealing from the quivering lips. They had met at last in the undercurrent. Without the trees swayed before a whistling wind and the sunlight was suddenly blotted out by a heavy mass of rushing, swirling clouds. The road changed from white to green and gray, and the gloom of twilight mantled the room. The inn quaked beneath the rumbling cannonade of the approaching storm. But these two, adrift on the tide of self, heard only the beating of their hearts, felt only the rising storm of their own emotions. Her shoulders rose; a long drawn sigh fluttered from her lips and the soft lashes touched her cheeks; her head sank to his shoulder. Langdon embraced the yielding figure and kissed her full on the mouth. A blinding radiance flared through the room, baring each detail in awful clearness, and tore the shadows from the rolling fields, while tumbling after rolled an avalanche of sound. The earth trembled violently; the terrified face of the innkeeper appeared at the door. The singer lifted his head, staring in semi-consciousness. "Rev'lution," he muttered, and relapsed into slumber.

Langdon, as though numbed by the shock, did not move. He felt the woman shiver in his arms. And in that moment he heard a cry, a pleading cry of one in fear. His passion fled; his blood ran cold, and he jumped to his feet, oblivious of the swaying figure that half fell to the floor.

The voice was the voice of his wife; she had called his name.

III

WITHOUT a glance at the prostrate figure, he reached for his cap and riding crop, rushed from the room out into the storm and ran up the road to the low-roofed shop. His hunter, from the corner, neighed a welcome, and the silent man at the bellows stared. Langdon tossed a coin to him, nervously loosened the throat strap and leaped into the saddle. Mechanically he glanced at his watch—it was three o'clock. The tanbark flew from his horse's hoofs as he galloped into the driving rain.

Wondering at the blanched drawn face, the blacksmith ran to the door in time to catch an indistinct glimpse of horse and man as they disappeared at the turn of the road in a shower of mud. He tapped his forehead significantly and returned to his work.

The storm raged over the countryside, a howling demon of unrestraint, rending its way through tottering walls, ripping away the swaying branches that waved in tremulous supplication, while ever the warring powers of the air met in titanic clash and from the quiver of the heavens dazzling arrows of light, like the fingers of God, leaped, piercing a trembling world.

Langdon swayed in his saddle, and clinging desperately, leaned his body close to the horse's head. The animal galloped, mad with fright, up the long hill, with heaving sides, frothing mouth and bloodshot eyes. His rider gave loose rein. The wildness of it all was in tune with the tumult in his breast. Superstition was foreign to his nature—he had always laughed at the gropings of the telepathists. No, there was no explanation, but the senses did not lie, and he knew it was his wife who had cried out; it was her voice that had called his name—and she was in danger. He had openly insulted her, left her without a word to find solace in nature—then had bartered his honor for the lips of a dissolute woman. Was this the

compensation of his philosophy? He recalled his answer: "The dissolute are degenerate." But he was normal. Was he? If so, she was right.

The rain soaked him to the skin and his body glowed. He reached the brow of the hill where for a moment the landscape flashed into weird distinctness. The valley was a blur of matted vegetation; on the opposite slope the trees drooped before the storm like broken reeds. In that instant he recognized the vantage point where a few hours before he had worshiped nature, and with peculiar poignancy the words of O'Donnell came to him: "Nature unrestrained means death." Then it was a meaningless phrase. Now? He did not know.

The day's inconsistencies, the irritating antagonisms, the constant intrusion of the name of Christ—it was all quite inexplicable. And ever he strove to brush aside the premonition of danger. It was merely overtired nerves, the sleepless vigil. Again he heard her voice above the storm calling his name, and he struck the horse's flank with his crop. The animal plunged down the hill to the valley road, forcing a way through the drooping branches that reached eagerly for the rider. It was a mad pace. As he reached the level country the storm suddenly abated, the wind steadied and the rain ceased; great rifts in the clouds opened to admit the sunlight that flooded the western rise in a sea of rose and gold, and as he rode the day closed about him.

It was dusk when Langdon turned up the broad drive beneath the elms. Lights filtered down through the trees, but as the house loomed up before him an oppressive silence seemed to pervade the scene. He skirted the broad piazza and drew rein by the tree that of old lifted its branches to soften the glare of the rising sun in his wife's room.

There was a dim light shining from her window and he saw that the broken pane had been replaced. A hot wave of self-abasement swept through his being, leaving him fearful, unnerved. Involuntarily his eyes turned to the foot of the tree. Gnarled limbs, heaped in

odd shapes, covered the grass, and struggling upward the sturdy trunk stood out, a scarred, stripped column. The white clean heart of the wood lay bare in a long narrow wound, as though cut open by a knife. Vague at first but persistent imaginings rose in Langdon's mind, and surging ever higher, fear held him a prisoner. The storm, her voice calling him, the tree shattered by lightning; she had sought the crucifix—it was about here it fell—and had been struck down in that first wild outburst of the gale. His blood ran cold, yet nothing could alter this deduction; it was not only probable—it was true.

Langdon slid from his horse, which bolted for the stable. And as he stood there looking at the twisted remnants of the elm he caught the gleam of silver in the foliage of a fallen branch. He hesitated, then picked up from the wet leaves a crucifix. In that instant he heard again that cry of fear, of supplication, and again his wife called to him. He thrust the crucifix into his pocket and ran at top speed up the path leading to the *porte-cochère*. A startled stable boy* jumped aside to let him pass, then stared after the flying, mud-bespattered figure. He reached the vestibule and fumbled with his keys. But the butler, ever on guard, opened the door. Blindly Langdon strode within. He had a vague impression of many faces and heard the sound of sobbing.

Then his heart seemed to fail. Silently with set jaws, he made his way through the spacious hall to the foot of the stairs. A restraining hand touched his arm. He paused, and turning a haggard face, looked into the tear-dimmed eyes of Faulkner.

"Is she dead?"

His voice was muffled, far away; he waited an eternity.

"Ah, sir—it was so sudden—she, my lady—we found her by the old elm. We—I phoned everywhere, sir, for you. We—"

"My God, man, answer me—is she dead?"

The servant struggled to control his voice. "A stroke, sir—she is unconscious."

Langdon turned and grasped the balustrade convulsively. And before that bowed figure the sobbing ceased. So he ascended the stairs and no one followed him. He was conscious of a tall form that barred his passage in the long hall leading to her room. Slowly he lifted his eyes to the kindly face, ignoring the outstretched hand; he sought in vain an answer to the hope that would not die. "Harcourt, is there no chance?"

The physician gripped the stooped shoulders with firm hands and gazed into the sad, despairing eyes. He shook his head. He caught the swaying figure that all but crumpled in his arms, but in a moment the faintness passed.

"Is there nothing—"

"No, my boy." It was the friend who spoke. "It is rare, such a case; as a rule, when lightning strikes death is immediate." He paused, then sought a diversion. "I am glad you came."

Langdon looked at him with wistful eyes. "She called me," he said simply.

For an instant the physician gazed at him, a quick, keen glance, then turning abruptly, tiptoed down the hall. "Come," he said.

They entered the room, where the white-capped nurse sat in trained alertness. Langdon went and stood beside the bed where his wife lay. Her eyes were closed, her nose attenuate; the luxuriant black hair accentuated the gray pallid skin, and her ears seemed transparent molds of alabaster.

Bitter anguish, unutterable remorse, flooded his being, and though no words came, he called on Death to take him ere she died.

Harcourt approached, raised the white, limp hand and timed the waning pulse. He watched with grave face above the unconscious form, noting with keen perception the bloodless lips, the tense nostrils, the purpling finger nails. Then he turned away.

"It will not be long," he said. His voice was low, vibrant with emotion. Langdon gave no sign that he heard. Harcourt stretched out his hand, an impulsive gesture of pity. At the touch upon his arm the silent watcher

trembled, and in those eyes, hope, a fitful spark, died. And with lingering steps, physician and nurse passed quietly out of the room, pausing on the threshold to look back; then the door was closed. Langdon was alone with his grief.

His was a bitter reverie. What did it matter to the others? A week, a month perhaps, and they would forget. He alone knew all she had suffered, all she had endured; and he knew whose hand had given her that cup of misery to drink. She had lived her life humbly, pretending nothing, giving all in the spirit of self-sacrifice. What had he given in return? The favor of a smile, a word, a philosophy in which he ruled, a God of intellect, demanding worship. His was the dogma of self. Because of this his jealous fury had followed her like a consuming flame. Was this to be her compensation? And if there were a God, was this His justice? In the impotence of his strength he called aloud unto the Christ he had reviled, that she might look into his eyes again and forgive him.

Unconsciously one hand slipped into his jacket pocket; it touched something damp and chill.

In that instant he saw the stricken tree, and his eyes slowly lifted to the simple peg upon the wall, now accusingly bare.

Long he stood there, while conflicting forces warred within him. Then he crossed the room with faltering steps and hung the crucifix upon the wall.

A sigh whispered through the room. His blood raced; his heart leaped; he clung to the wall, quivering in every nerve. He turned.

He saw her clear-eyed gaze fixed upon the crucifix, and her lips moving as though in prayer.

His senses reeled; his spirit rose, sank, rose again, quenching the flame of hope, only to feel it burn anew. He did not dare to move lest death come to rob him.

Then she saw him, a haggard, pitiable figure, standing beneath the cross. She smiled contentedly and held out her hand to him. "I knew you would come," she said.

But Langdon staggered forward and fell upon his knees beside her bed, in his eyes wonderment born of the unreal. The pallor was gone from brow and throat. She seemed as one just awakened from peaceful sleep.

Whence came this miracle?

Swept aside, lost in this whirl of inconsistencies, he drifted helpless. But in the light that shone from out her face his spirit soared above the flood, more certain grown within the sweet compassion of her eyes. "Mary—" he whispered.

Then something burst within him, and unashamed he wept—as men weep—with dry eyes and choking sobs.

But she laid her hand tenderly on the bowed head, and smiled up at the crucifix with glistening eyes.



"YOU are a Free Thinker, I believe?"
"Yes; I have never been married."



MANY a true word is spoken behind our backs.

THE SECRET

By IZOLA FORRESTER

HE had found her at night, wandering alone among the shadows in the garden of the white poppies.

"Why have I never met you here before?" he had asked her. "This is my garden."

She had not noticed his questioning, but had knelt among the drooping flowers, touching them with compassionate fingers.

"I come here to see them," she told him. "I love them. I love to seek them among the deep shadows, the drooping white poppies of the night that find the darkness too heavy a sorrow to be borne, the little crushed white poppies that are like the souls of tired children who die in their sleep, that are like the spirits of the little white moths which have kissed the fire and have perished through fulfillment."

"Do you come here every night?" he had asked her.

"Not every night. Only the nights when the moon shines and the shadows are deep, so I may find the poppies easily. And sometimes they will not let me come at all."

"Who are 'they'?"

"You must not ask me."

"Why?" He came nearer to her, but she stepped beyond the reach of his yearning hands.

"If you question me, I may not come to the garden again."

After that he had questioned her no more. It was enough for him to go into the garden when the moon shone and find her there among the deep shadows, her face rare and tender in the white gleaming as some dreaming flower.

At first she had been afraid of him,

but after a while, when she found he had ceased to question her, she would not go away when he came near to her. And at last, one night as she sat under a young oak, he lay in the fragrant, dewy grass at her feet and told her he loved her. Then she had left him without even answering, left him as if she feared his following, and he had lain there silently among the deep shadows, for he knew he should find her again.

But the next night she was not among the white poppies, and he searched all through the garden until at length he came before her, standing slim and grave and sweet in the shadows under the young oak. And then he knew she had awaited him there. The shadow of the young oak folded itself about her like a mantle, but the gleam of the moonlight was in her eyes as she watched for his coming.

"I love you," he told her joyously, victoriously, for he was proud of his discovery. But she was silent; only her eyes regarded him with a curious, wistful intentness. "I love you beyond life and death and heaven and earth. I love you with a force that laughs at death."

She smiled, a grave, sweet smile of knowledge in which he had no share.

"One need not laugh at Death. He is the brother of Life."

"But I love you with a power that can conquer life."

"Dear, it is already conquered. Love is life's conqueror."

Yet she had come again the next night, and he had wondered whether it was because she still sought white poppies, or whether she loved him.

"I love you," he told her, and this

time she let him touch her hands, her cool, soft hands that were like the satin petals of the drooping poppies, and her eyes were brooding and deep as the moonlit shadows as she looked up at him.

"Still, I may not love you."

"But you shall."

She shook her head, and he caught the faint, subtle fragrance of her hair as the night wind blew strands of it against his face.

"If love is life's conqueror, love is right through the majesty of its own power."

She laughed softly and leaned toward him.

"It is wrong for me to love."

"If it is true that you love, it cannot be wrong. You question the law of the Infinite when you deny it."

"Still, it is wrong," she told him.

"Why?"

"I dare not tell. It is my secret."

"If you loved me, you would want to tell me."

"Because I love you, I dare not tell."

"Dare!" He caught her suddenly in his embrace, crushing her close in his arms. She struggled and cried out, beating her hands like fluttering wings against his seeking lips, and then lay still. And when he lifted his face from hers, her lips, like thirsty flowers, remained upturned, but her eyes were closed.

"Listen to me, lady of the shadows," he whispered. "I would not care what power refused me the right to love you. I would not care what secret swayed our lives apart. I would not care though earth and heaven and hell itself denied you to me."

And suddenly, at the dominant note in his words, she smiled at him, the same little smile of hidden knowledge in which he had no share.

"You would not say so if you knew."

"If I knew what?"

She slipped away from his arms and leaned back against the young oak, leaned away from him among the shadows.

"My secret."

He laughed. "But I shall know it.

It is inevitable that I shall know it. You will tell me it of your own free will."

Her voice came to him from the shadows, low and wistful. "It is not permitted me to tell. If you love me, you will find it out yourself."

"Who refuses you permission to tell me?"

"I may not tell you even that."

"Shall I ever know?"

She shivered and drew further back among the shadows.

"If you are not satisfied, you shall know."

He reached out his arms to find her, and pressed his face to the dusky, clinging, satin soft masses of her heavy hair, her hair that was fragrant and dark and caressing like the night.

"You are afraid of this thing—love of me—are you not? Afraid it may destroy our love? Listen, dear. I do not ask to know it. I do not care what it may be. If life has been unkind to you, forget the heartache in our love. If you have been unkind to life, what is love if not all healing? My love is so vast, so perfect, it can forgive anything."

"Can it?"

And again she smiled back at him, that strange little smile of wistful, inscrutable knowledge in which he had no share.

And he took her silence for acquiescence, and rejoiced because his love had scaled the heights of forgiveness and had triumphed.

So the days passed until the hour of fulfillment came. She was his, by word of man and law of life. Yet he, looking at her in that supreme hour, felt the old doubt steal over him and taint the perfect joy of his possession. He had missed her after the music had died away and the lights were out, the little earth lights that she always shrank from. And laughing to himself over the witchery of her, the tender woman witchery that loved to lure him on in mystery, he went out into the night to seek her.

Through the garden of the white poppies he went, calling her softly to him, until out of the velvet darkness of the shadows he heard her answer him, until he found her, standing under the

young oak, her face uplifted to the light of the moon.

"Why did you make me seek you?" he asked. And he fancied that her hands trembled as she reached out to him, and drew him near her.

"I came because I was afraid."

"Afraid of what?" He held her fingers, the cool, soft, clinging fingers, against his lips. "Of what should you be afraid, my lady of the shadows, in this supreme hour, this perfect hour of love's fulfillment?"

"It is too perfect," she breathed. "It is like the fragrance of the poppies that makes one faint with ecstasy, this love of yours. It is too perfect."

And he smiled to himself at her *naïveté*, at her delicious simplicity in concealing her fear from him, her fear that he would ask her for her secret. What a child the woman was! He was glad he had not asked her, glad he had forgiven her its possession. In a measure, it compensated for the many secrets he had in pity withheld from her.

"I do not ask to know," he told her. "You must put this fear out of your heart, for have I not forgiven you?"

"Have you?" She smiled at him with the old, strange smile of grave, tender wisdom. "Why?"

"To prove how vast and strong and true my love is," he told her kindly. "I do not seek to know your secret."

"Yet you must know it now, poor love of mine," she said pityingly. "And see if I have not told you truly; see if before this test your love will not wither and die as a flower in the heat of the sun."

She moved away from him, away from the shadow of the young oak tree that folded itself about her like a mantle, and stood forth in the silvery light of the moon. And suddenly he caught a flash of radiance about her, of vivid white radiance, white as the rainbow foam is white, white as the path of the moon on the sea, white as the glory of the sun at midday. And he knew her secret, and sank in the scented grass at her feet.

She had wings.

Soft as the satin petals of the white poppies that she loved they were, daz- zlingly glorious as flashing blades of sil- vered steel in the sunlight, the great, tender, brooding wings that slowly un- folded from her shoulders and swept the shadows back about her. And she smiled down at him, the grave, in- scrutable smile of knowledge in which he might not share, and pitied him for the weakness of his love which had for- given her the secret.

"I might have stayed with you," she told him. "Dear, it might have been—once in a thousand years, it might have been, if you had not doubted."

And when he lifted his arms up to her she was gone. Out of the brooding darkness he caught the sound of her wings, caught the swift, sweet wind from them as she passed him by, and he was alone in the garden of the white poppies that were like little tired moths in the moonlight, little tired white moths with folded wings which had kissed the fire and perished through fulfillment.



SOUTH AMERICAN TEACHER—Give the boundaries of our glorious nation.
PUPIL—Last week's, yesterday's or today's?



CUPID wanted to sharpen his arrows, so he got Jealousy to help him.

A BALLADE OF DEAD LADIES

By STEPHEN ANDREW

A FADED frock, a broken fan,
Old fragments falling to decay;
These tell us tales, as such things can,
Of those who used them in their day.
And more they tell—how, 'mid their play,
The Fiddler called, the Dance was set.
And when he calls, who dare delay?
For all must dance Fate's minuet.

Yet, ere the Fiddler's tune began,
Those ladies, laughing, glad and gay,
Played out their games, and lightly span
Their dainty webs to snare their prey;
For that was ever Woman's way—
To draw, as victims to her net,
All, save him whom she must obey,
Who cries, "Come, dance my minuet."

And, as their broken toys I scan,
A faded note, with ink turned gray,
A ring, the gift of some dead man;
All the old box's disarray—
I gird against the Fiddler's sway;
Why might these ladies not forget,
That when he calls, no one may stay;
That all must dance Fate's minuet?

ENVOI

Dead Ladies, wheresoe'er you stray,
Cajole the Fiddler; bid him let
Us cry no more, with sore dismay,
That all must dance Fate's minuet.



WHEN our vices quit us, we flatter ourselves that it is we who quit them.

UNE NUIT DE NOVEMBRE

Par J. H. ROSNY

NOUS vîmes, à la terrasse d'un cabaret, sur le bord de la route, trois croque-morts attablés devant du piccolo, du saucisson et une miche rousse. Jean Bonval les considéra avec une singulière bienveillance et murmura :

— Ils me donnent l'appétit ! . . . Si vous le voulez bien, nous nous reposons un moment dans cette guinguette.

Cela parut une fantaisie de multimillionnaire, blasé sur les choses coûteuses de ce monde. Nous acquiesçâmes. Et Bonval, assis sur une chaise de fer rouillé, commanda du vin gris, une omelette au lard, des cerises. Il mangea formidablement et il avait engagé avec les croque-morts une conversation pleine de bonhomie. Il leur offrit le café, le cognac et des cigares bagués. Ils repartirent, joyeux, et le plus vieux dit, avec politesse :

— J'espère, monsieur, que vous vivrez assez longtemps pour n'avoir pas besoin de mes services !

Bonval les suivit longtemps de l'œil :

J'aime, fit-il, les croque-morts et les fossoyeurs. . . .

Il parut rêveur, puis il reprit, en fumant avec béatitude un petit cigare couleur de chique :

— Ce n'est pas un goût macabre, non. C'est, oserai-je dire, un sentiment profond et louable. Vous savez tous que j'ai été très pauvre. A vingt ans après une sinistre crise de misère, je résolus brusquement d'aller voir si la vie ne valait pas mieux dans les autres parties du monde. Et je partis pour le Havre, résolu à servir, s'il se pouvait, sur un transatlantique. J'avais quelques sous. Pas moyen de prendre le chemin de fer. Il fallait bien faire la route à pied ! J'es-

pérais trouver de-ci de-là un brin de travail qui me donnerait la soupe, et une botte de paille pour la nuit. C'était en novembre, par un ciel clair et terrible, la Seine était prise, un vent d'aiguilles courait sur les plaines.

Je m'en tirai mal. Les gens m'accueillaient de travers, avec des visages fermés et des yeux soupçonneux. Le cinquième jour, vers le soir, j'errais, le ventre vide, les pattes gelées, dans un paysage polaire. On m'avait chassé d'un village, mes oreilles bourdonnaient encore du hurlement des chiens. . . . Dans le vent féroce, je claquais des dents, j'étais un pauvre fauve vaincu, prêt à crever. Si je m'arrêtais, c'était la mort. J'avancai donc, les articulations raides, la face cinglée, l'âme noire. A la fin, ma faible machine fléchit, Je m'appuyai contre un poteau, ma tête se mit à tourbillonner, des étincelles bleues dansaient au fond de mes prunelles. . . .

"Je suis fichu !" songeais-je.

J'en étais navré, étant de cœur ardent, avec cette promptitude à l'illusion qui fait aimer la vie. Mais quoi ! tout craquait, mes pensées voguaient en épaves, le gouffre éternel m'aspirait. Je m'abandonnais lugubrement au sort, lorsqu'un bruit de roues et un piétinement sur la route dure attirèrent mon attention. Je discernai, dans le crépuscule, une petite charrette, un âne et un homme enfoncé dans une houppe. J'eus encore la force de crier :

— Au secours !

Puis je perdis le sens.

Je me réveillai, étendu dans la charrette, enveloppé d'une vieille couverture de cheval et d'une bâche. Dans la lueur rouge, je vis une face rugueuse, des yeux triangulaires, deux mains énormes :

—Pas peur! fit une voix rauque. C'est pas aujourd' hui que je creuserai ta fosse. T'es jeune, t'as rien de gelé... t'en as encore pour un petit temps.

L'âne trotait en douceur; une lune d'escarboucle se levait au fond du firmament; le froid tombait plus effroyable. A la fin, l'équipage s'arrêta devant une cabane trapue, isolée et d'aspect miteux:

—Peux-tu te lever? cria l'homme. Sion, je te prendrai sur les épaules... j'en ai enlevé de plus lourds que toi.

Après quelques efforts, je me mis debout et je suivis mon sauveur dans sa cahute:

—C'est pas le luxe qui m'étouffe! ricana l'hôte, en allumant une lampe à pétrole. . . . Mais quoué! y a du feu, de la soupe au lard et du pain.

A mesure, je voyais une flamme de tourbe, je flairais l'odeur des choux; une joie merveilleuse pénétrait ma jeunesse.

—Vous m'avez sauvé la vie! m'écriai-je, en saisissant l'énorme patte de l'homme. . . . Je ne l'oublierai jamais!

—Ça me change! fit-il avec un rire épaïs. Car de dire que c'est mon métier de s'aider les gens, je mentirais.

Il posa deux assiettes sur la table, les remplit de soupe et de lard, coupa d'énormes tranches de pain et remplit un pichet de cidre.

—Si le cœur t'en dit! grommela-t-il. A ton service!

J'ai le souvenir de quelques bons repas. Mais celui-ci, ce fut le repas unique, le repas de gloire, le repas de vie! Ah! cette soupe, ce pain, ce cidre. . . . Lorsque j'y songe, le cœur me bat; il me semble avoir, ce soir-là, mangé de la résurrection!

Mon hôte était taciturne. Il me considérait de son œil rude, secouait par moments la tête et marmonnait dans sa barbe. Quand le repas fut terminé, il déclara:

—Tu auras une paillasse, là haut, avec une bonne peau de bique. J'ai sommeil et toi aussi. Allons nous coucher.

Je dormis douze heures. Quand je descendis, mon hôte me servit un café de campagne, avec du lait et une croûte.

—Voilà! dit-il quand nous nous levâmes de table. Faut que j'aïlle à ma besogne. J'ai deux fosses à creuser, et ça sera dur.

—De mon métier, je suis croquemort et fossoyeur. . . . Hein! ça t'ennuie? J'aurais peut-être dû te le dire tout de suite, mais je m'ai pensé qu'y valait mieux te sortir d'abord d'affaire. Si t'es dégoûté maintenant, ben! t'auras au moins le ventre chaud.

Je n'étais pas dégoûté; j'étais attendri; je repris la grosse main noire en m'écriant:

—Il faudrait que je sois une sale crapule pour oublier jamais ce que vous avez fait pour moi.

—Ah! ben, s'exclama-t-il. Tu le prends par le bon bout, t'es pas une tourte et ça me fait plaisir. D'abord que c'est comme ça, je veux encore faire quelque chose pour toi. Tu emporteras cette miche, puis cette pièce de cent sous . . . puis. . . .

Il s'interrompit, alla ouvrir une armoire, tira d'une boîte de fer-blanc une cordelette dont il coupa un fragment:

—V' là qui te portera bonheur, mon lapin . . . c'est de la corde de pendu, de la bonne corde "d'essuicidé."

Je pris le pain, l'écu de cinq francs, le bout de la corde et l'homme m'accompagna sur la route.

—Bonne chance! cria-t-il. . . . T'as de quoué devenir riche!

Il ne voulut jamais rien prendre, sinon les cinq francs que je lui devais; il se sentait de force à enterrer pendant trente ans encore. Comme j'insistais, il finit par dire:

—Puisque c'est comme ça, y a une chose qui me ferait plaisir, mais là! plaisir. Achète-moi une concession à perpétuité, un bon bout de terrain, et paye-moi un caveau ousque je soye bien à l'aise.

Je lui ai, ma foi, fait construire le plus beau caveau de son cimetière. Il en a éprouvé une joie extraordinaire et quand il a du loisir, il y va soigner ses roses et ses immortelles; il y lit, avec orgueil, en lettres d'or:

CI GIT JACQUES DEMERCIER

NÉ LE 18 AVRIL 1860

MORT LE . . .

H A V O C

By E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

Synopsis of Previous Chapters

Arthur Dorward, a young American journalist in Vienna, secures for his paper a great "beat"—a full account of a private conference between the Emperor and the Czar, and attempts to get out of the country with his papers. On the train with him is David Bellamy, an English diplomatic agent, and several Austrian secret service men. Dorward is attacked by the Austrians, thrown from the train and his papers taken from him. Bellamy then plots to secure the papers and enlists the help of Louise Idiale, a Serbian opera singer, who proceeds to encourage the attentions of Von Behrling, in charge of the Austrian party, and induces him to agree to sell the papers to the English government. He turns over to Bellamy a packet, found to contain only blank paper, for which the English have paid twenty thousand pounds, and Bellamy is thereby discredited. Von Behrling is found murdered that same evening. Stephen Laverick, a broker, finds the body and takes with him the wallet found on the dead man. He uses the money to tide over a business crisis, and helps his late partner, Arthur Morrison, to get out of the country. He buys off a man, James Shepherd, who has evidence tending to incriminate Morrison, and takes the latter's half-sister, Zoe, to dinner at a restaurant, where he makes the acquaintance of Mlle. Idiale. She visits him at his office, ostensibly to buy stocks, then invites him to come to the Opera and join her at supper later. There she charges him with knowledge of the pocketbook taken from the dead man, and demands that he deliver to her a document contained therein. He looks into the pocketbook at his office and finds the papers she has spoken of; he promises Mlle. Idiale to come to her apartment in the evening and bring them. During the day he discovers a plot to rob his safe. On his way to keep his appointment he is mysteriously attacked, but beats off his assailant.

This novel began in the September **SMART SET**. Back copies of the magazine may be had from any newsdealer or the publishers.

XXX

A FRENCH man servant, with the sad face and dress of a cleric, took possession of Laverick as soon as he asked for Mademoiselle Idiale. He was shown into one of the most delightful little rooms he had ever even dreamed of. The walls were hung with that peculiar shade of blue satin which mademoiselle so often affected in her clothes. The air in the room seemed as though it had passed through a grove of lemon trees, fresh and sweet yet curiously fragrant. Laverick sank down into one of the luxurious blue brocaded chairs, conscious for the first time that he was out of breath. Then the door opened silently and there entered, not the woman whom he had been expecting, but Mr. Lassen. Laverick rose to his

feet half doubtfully. Lassen's small, queer-shaped face seemed to have become one huge ingratiating smile.

"I am very glad to see you, Mr. Laverick," he said, "very glad indeed."

"I have come to call upon Mademoiselle Idiale," Laverick answered somewhat curtly. He had disliked this man from the first moment he had seen him, and he saw no particular reason why he should conceal his feelings.

"I am here to explain," Mr. Lassen continued, seating himself. "Mademoiselle Idiale is unfortunately prevented from seeing you. She has a severe nervous headache, and her only chance of appearing tonight is to remain perfectly undisturbed. Women of her position have to be exceptionally careful."

"I am exceedingly sorry to hear it," Laverick answered. "In that

case, I will call again when she has recovered."

"By all means, my dear sir!" Mr. Lassen exclaimed. "Many times, let us hope. But in the meantime there is a little affair of a document which you were going to deliver to mademoiselle. She is most anxious that you should hand it to me—most anxious. She will tender you her thanks personally tomorrow or the next day, if she is well enough to receive."

Laverick shook his head firmly.

"Under no circumstances," he declared, "should I think of delivering the document into any other hands save those of Mademoiselle Idiale. To tell you the truth, I had not fully decided whether to part with it even to her. I was simply prepared to hear what she had to say. But it may save time if I assure you, Mr. Lassen, that nothing would induce me to part with it to any one else."

There was no trace left of that ingratiating smile upon Mr. Lassen's face. He had the appearance now of an ugly animal about to show its teeth. Laverick was suddenly on his guard. More adventures, he thought, casting a somewhat contemptuous glance at the physique of the other man. He laid his fingers as though carelessly upon a small bronze ornament which reposed among others on a table by his side. If Mr. Lassen's fat and ugly hand should steal toward his pocket, Laverick was prepared to hurl the ornament at his head.

"I am very sorry to hear you say that, Mr. Laverick," Lassen said slowly. "I hope very much that you will see your way clear to change your mind. I can assure you that I have as much right to the document as Mademoiselle Idiale, and that it is her earnest wish that you should hand it over to me. Further, I may inform you that the document itself is a most incriminating one. Its possession upon your person might be a very serious matter indeed."

Laverick shrugged his shoulders. "As a matter of fact," he declared, "I certainly have no idea of carrying it about with me. On the other hand, I shall

part with it to no one. I might discuss the matter with Mademoiselle Idiale as soon as she is recovered. I am not disposed even to do as much with you."

Laverick rose to his feet with the obvious intention of leaving. Lassen confronted him.

"Mr. Laverick," he said, "in your own interests you must not talk like that—in your own interests, I say."

"At any rate," Laverick remarked, "my interests are better looked after by myself than by strangers. You must forgive my adding, Mr. Lassen, that you are a stranger to me. You must allow me to wish you good afternoon."

Lassen shook his head. "Mr. Laverick," he declared, "you are too impetuous. You force me to remind you that your own position as holder of that document is not a very secure one. All the police in this capital are searching today for the man who killed that unfortunate creature who was found murdered in Crooked Friars Alley. If they could find the man who was in possession of his pocketbook, who was in possession of twenty thousand pounds taken from the dead man's body and with it had saved his business and his credit, how then do you think? I say nothing of the document."

Laverick was silent for a moment. He realized, however, that to make terms with this man was impossible. Besides, he did not trust him. He did not even trust him so far as to believe him the accredited envoy of mademoiselle.

"My unfortunate position," Laverick said, "has nothing whatever to do with the matter. Where you got your information I cannot say. I neither accept nor deny it. But I can assure you that I am not to be intimidated. This document will remain in my possession until someone can show me a very good reason for parting with it."

Lassen beat the back of the chair against which he was standing with his clenched fist.

"A reason why you should part with it!" he exclaimed fiercely. "Man, it stares you there in the face! If you do

not part with it, you will be arrested within twenty-four hours for the murder or complicity in the murder of Rudolph Von Behrling! That I swear! That I shall see to myself!"

"In which case," Laverick remarked, the document will fall into the hands of the English police."

The shot told. Laverick could have laughed as he watched its effect upon his listener. Mr. Lassen's face was black with unuttered curses. He looked as though he would have fallen upon Laverick bodily.

"What do you know about its contents?" he hissed. "Why do you suppose it would not suit my purpose to have it fall into the hands of the English police?"

"I can see no reason whatever," Laverick answered, "why I should take you into my confidence as to how much I know and how much I do not know. I wish you good afternoon, Mr. Lassen. I shall be ready to wait upon Mademoiselle Idiale at any time she sends for me. But in case it should interest you to be made aware of the fact," he added, with a little bow, "I am not going round with this terrible document in my possession."

He moved to the door. Already his hand was upon the knob when he saw the movement for which he had watched. Laverick, with a single bound, was upon his would-be assailant. The hand which had already closed upon the butt of the small revolver was gripped as though in a vise. With a scream of pain Lassen dropped the weapon upon the floor. Laverick picked it up, thrust it into his coat pocket, and taking the man's collar with both hands, he shook him till the eyes seemed starting from his head and his shrieks of fear were changed into moans. Then he flung him into a corner of the room.

"You cowardly brute!" he exclaimed. "You come of the breed of men who shoot from behind. If ever I lay my hands upon you again you'll be lucky if you live to whimper about it."

He left the room and rang for the lift. He saw no trace of any servants in the hall, nor heard any sound of anyone

moving. From Dover Street he drove straight to Zoe's house. Keeping the cab waiting, he knocked at the door. She opened it herself at once, and her eyes glowed with pleasure.

"How delightful!" she cried. "Please come in. Have you come to take me to the theater?"

He followed her into the parlor and closed the door behind them.

"Zoe," he said, "I am going to ask you a favor."

"Me a favor?" she repeated. "I think you know how happy it will make me if there is anything—anything at all in the world that I could do."

"A week ago," Laverick continued, "I was an honest but not very successful stockbroker, with a natural longing for adventures which never came my way. Since then things have altered. I have stumbled upon the most curious little chain of happenings which ever became entwined with the life of a commonplace being like myself. The net result, for the moment, is this: Everyone is trying to steal from me a certain document which I have in my pocket. I want to hide it for the night. I cannot go to the police; it is too late to go back to Chancery Lane, and I have an instinctive feeling that my flat is absolutely at the mercy of my enemies. May I hide my document in your room? I do not believe for a moment that anyone would think of searching here."

"Of course you may," she answered. "But listen. Can you see out into the street without moving very much?"

He turned his head. He had been standing with his back to the window, and Zoe had been facing it. "Yes, I can see into the street," he assented.

"Tell me—you see that taxi on the other side of the way?" she asked.

He nodded. "It wasn't there when I drove up," he remarked.

"I was at the window looking out when you came," she said. "It followed you out from the Square into this street. Directly you stopped I saw the man pull up his cab. It seemed to me so strange, just as though someone were watching you all the time."

Laverick stood still, looking out of the window. "Who lives in the house opposite?" he asked.

"I am afraid," she answered, "that there are no very nice people who live round here. The people whom I see coming in and out of that house are not nice people at all."

"I understand," he said. "Thank you, Zoe. You are right. Whatever I do with my precious document, I shall not leave it here. To tell you the truth, I thought, for certain reasons, that after I had paid my last call this afternoon I should not be followed any more. Come back with me and I will give you some dinner before you go to the theater."

She clapped her hands. "I shall love it," she declared. "But what will you do with the document?"

"I shall take a room at the Milan Hotel," he said, "and give it to the cashier. They have a wonderful safe there. It is the best thing I can think of. Can you suggest anything?"

She considered for a moment. "Do you know what is inside?" she asked.

He shook his head. "I have no idea; it is the most mysterious document in the world, so far as I am concerned."

"Why not open it and read it?" she suggested. "Then you will know exactly what it is all about. You can learn it by heart and tear it up."

"I must think that over," he said. "One second before we go out."

He took from his pocket the revolver which Lassen had dropped. It was a perfect little weapon, and fully charged. He replaced it in his pocket, keeping his finger upon the trigger.

"Now, Zoe, if you are ready," he said, "come along."

They stepped out and entered the taxi, unmolested, and Laverick ordered:

"To the Milan Hotel."

XXXI

ABOUT twenty minutes past six on the same evening, Bellamy, his clothes thick with dust, his face dark with anger, jumped lightly from a sixty horsepower car and rang the bell of the lift at

Number 15 Dover Street. Arrived on the first floor, he was confronted almost immediately by the sad-faced man servant.

"Mademoiselle is in?" Bellamy asked quickly.

The man's expression was one of somber regret. "Mademoiselle is spending the day in the country, sir."

Bellamy took him by the shoulders and flung him against the wall. "Thank you," he said; "I've heard that before."

He walked down the passage and knocked softly at the door of Louise's sleeping apartment. There was no answer. He knocked again and listened at the keyhole. There was some movement inside but no one spoke.

"Louise," he cried softly, "let me in. It is I—David."

Again the only reply was a strange sound. Almost it seemed as though a woman were trying to speak with a hand over her mouth. Bellamy suddenly stiffened into rigid attention. There were voices in the small reception room—the voice of Henri, the butler, and another. Reluctantly he turned away from the closed door and walked swiftly down the passage. He entered the reception room and looked around him in amazement. It was still in disorder. Lassen sat in an easy chair with a tumbler of brandy by his side. Henri was tying a bandage around his head; his collar was torn; there were marks of blood about his shirt. Bellamy's eyes sparkled. He closed the door behind him.

"Come," he exclaimed; "after all, I fancy that my arrival is somewhat opportune!"

Henri turned toward him with a reproachful gesture. "Monsieur Lassen has been unwell," he said. "He has had a fit and fallen down."

Bellamy laughed contemptuously. "I think I can reconstruct the scene a little better than that," he declared. "What do you say, Mr. Lassen?"

The man glared at him viciously. "I do not know what you are talking about," he said. "I do not wish to speak to you. I am ill. You had better go and persuade mademoiselle to return. She is at Dover, waiting."

"You are a liar!" Bellamy answered. "She is in her room now, locked up—guarded perhaps by one of your creatures. I have been halfway to Dover, but I tumbled to your scheme in time, Mr. Lassen. You found our friend Laverick a trifle awkward, I fancy."

Lassen swore through his teeth but said nothing.

"From your somewhat disheveled appearance," Bellamy continued, "I think I may conclude that you were not able to come to any amicable arrangement with mademoiselle's visitor. He declined to accept you as her proxy, I imagine. Still, one must make sure."

He advanced quickly. Lassen shrank back in his chair. "What do you mean?" he asked gruffly. "Keep him away from me, Henri. Ring the bell for your other man. This fellow will do me mischief."

"Not I," Bellamy answered scornfully. "Stay where you are, Henri. To your other accomplishments I have no doubt you include that of valeting. Take off his coat."

"But, monsieur!" Henri protested.

Bellamy turned to the door, locked it and put the key in his pocket.

"Look here," he said; "I do not for one moment believe that Laverick handed over to you the document you were so anxious to obtain. I imagine that your somewhat battered appearance is the result of fruitless argument on your part with a view to inducing him to do so. Nevertheless, I can afford to run no risks. The coat first, please, Henri. It is necessary that I search it thoroughly."

There was a brief hesitation. Bellamy's hand went into his pocket. "I hate to seem melodramatic," he declared, "and I never carry firearms, but I have a little life preserver here which I have learned to use pretty effectively. Come, you know it isn't a fair fight. You've had all you want, Lassen, and Henri there hasn't the muscle of a chicken."

Lassen rose, groaning, to his feet and allowed his coat to be removed. Bellamy glanced through the pockets, hold-

ing one letter for a moment in his hand as he glanced at the address.

"The writing of our friend Streuss," he remarked, with a smile. "No, you need not fear, Lassen. I am not going to read it. There is plenty of proof of your treachery without this."

Lassen's face was livid and his eyes seemed like beads. Bellamy handed back the coat.

"That's all right," he said. "Nothing there, I am glad to see—or in the waistcoat," he added, passing his hands over it. "I'll trouble you to stand up for a moment, Mr. Lassen."

The man did as he was bid and Bellamy felt him all over. When he had finished, he held in his hand a key.

"The key of mademoiselle's chamber, I have no doubt," he announced. "I will leave you while I see what deviltry you have been up to."

He walked to the table by the window and deliberately cut the telephone wire. With the instrument under his arm, he left the room. Lassen blundered to his feet as though to intercept him, but Bellamy's eyes suddenly flashed red fury, and the life preserver of which he had spoken glittered above his head. Lassen staggered away.

"I'm a long suffering man," Bellamy said, "but if you don't remember now that you're the beaten dog I may lose my temper."

He locked them in, walked down the passage and opened the door of Louise's bedchamber with fingers that trembled a little. With a smothered oath he cut the cord from the arms of the maid and the gag from her mouth. Louise, clad in a loose afternoon gown, was lying upon the bed as though asleep. Bellamy saw with an impulse of relief that she was breathing regularly.

"This is Lassen's work, of course!" he exclaimed. "What have they done to her?"

The maid spoke thickly. She was very pale and unsteady upon her feet. "It was something they put in her wine," she faltered. "I heard Mr. Lassen say that it would keep her quiet for three or four hours. I think—I think she is waking now."

Louise opened her eyes and looked at them with amazement. Bellamy sat by the side of the bed and supported her with his arm.

"It is only a skirmish, dear," he whispered; "and it is a drawn battle, although you got the worst of it."

She put her hand to her head, struggling to remember. "Mr. Laverick has been here?" she asked.

"He has. Your friend Lassen has been taking a hand in the game. I came here and found you like this and Annette tied up. Henri is in with him. What has become of your other servants I don't know."

"Henri asked for a holiday for them," she said, the color slowly returning to her cheeks. "I begin to understand. But tell me, what happened when Mr. Laverick came?"

"I can only guess," Bellamy answered, "but it seems that Lassen must have received him as though with your authority."

"And what then?" she asked quickly.

"I am almost certain," Bellamy declared, "that Laverick refused to have anything to do with him. I received a wire from Dover to say that you were on your way home, and asking me to meet you at the Lord Warden Hotel. I borrowed Montresor's racing car, but I sent telegrams and was pretty soon on my way back. When I arrived here I found Lassen in your little room with a broken head. Evidently Laverick and he had a scrimmage, and he got the worst of it. I have searched him to his bones and he has no paper. Laverick brought it here, without a doubt, and has taken it away again."

She rose to her feet. "Go and let Lassen out," she said. "Tell him he must never come here again. I will see him at the Opera House tonight or tomorrow night—that is, if I can get there. I do not know whether I shall feel able to sing."

"I shall take the liberty also," remarked Bellamy, "of kicking Henri out."

Louise sighed. "He was such a good servant. I think it must have cost our friend Streuss a good deal to buy Henri.

You will come back to me when you have finished with them?"

Bellamy made short work of his discomfited prisoners. Lassen was surly but only eager to depart; Henri was resigned but tearful. Almost as they went the other servants began to return from their various missions. Bellamy went back to Louise, who was lying down again and drinking some tea. She motioned Bellamy to come over to her side.

"Tell me," she asked, "what are you going to do now?"

"I am going to do what I ought to have done before," Bellamy answered. "Laverick's connection with this affair is suspicious enough, but after all he is a sportsman and an Englishman. I am going to tell him what that envelope contains—tell him the truth."

"You are right," she exclaimed. "Whatever he may have done, if you tell him the truth he will give you that document; I am sure of it. Do you know where to find him?"

"I shall go to his rooms," Bellamy declared. "I must be quick, too, for Lassen is free—they will know that he has failed."

"Come back to me, David," she begged, and he kissed her fingers and hurried out.

XXXII

LAVERICK, sitting with Zoe at dinner, caught his companion looking around the restaurant with an expression in her face which he did not wholly understand.

"Something is the matter with you this evening, Zoe," he said anxiously. "Tell me what it is. You don't like this place?"

"Of course I do."

"Is it your dinner, then, or me?" he persisted. "Come, out with it. Haven't we promised to tell each other the truth always?"

The pink color came slowly into her cheeks. Her eyes, raised for a moment to his, were almost reproachful.

"You know very well it is not anything to do with you," she whispered. "You are too kind to me all the time.

Only," she went on a little hesitatingly, "don't you realize—can't you see how differently most of the girls here are dressed? I don't mind so much for myself—but you—you have so many friends. You keep on seeing people whom you know. I am afraid they will think that I ought not to be here."

He looked at her in surprise, mingled perhaps with compunction. For the first time he appreciated the actual shabbiness of her clothes. Everything about her was so neat, pathetically neat as it seemed to him in one illuminating moment of realization. The white linen collar, notwithstanding its frayed edges, was spotlessly clean. The black bow was carefully tied to conceal its worn parts. Her gloves had been stitched a good many times. Her gown, although it was tidy, was old-fashioned and had distinctly seen its best days. He suddenly recognized the effort, the almost despairing effort, which her toilette had cost her.

"I don't think that men notice these things," he said simply. "To me you look just as you should look—and I wouldn't change places with any other man in the room."

Her eyes were soft, perilously soft, as she looked at him with uplifted eyebrows and a faint smile struggling at the corners of her lips. A wave of tenderness crept into his heart. What a brave little child she was!

"You will quite spoil me if you make such nice speeches," she murmured.

"Anyhow," he went on, speaking with decision, "so long as you feel like that, you are going to have a new gown—or two—and a new hat; and you are going to have them at once. They are going to be bought with your brother's money, mind. Shall I come shopping with you?"

She shook her head. "Mind, it is partly for your sake that I give in," she said. "It would be lovely to have you come, but you would spend far too much money. You really mean it all?"

"Absolutely," he answered. "I insist upon it."

She leaned toward him with dancing eyes. After all, she was very much of

a child. "I might get a coat and skirt," she remarked thoughtfully, "and a simple white dress. A black hat would do for both of them."

"Don't you study your brother too much," Laverick declared. "His stock is going up all the time."

"Tell me your favorite color," she begged confidentially.

"I can't conceive of your looking nicer than you do in black," he replied.

She made a wry face. "I suppose it must be black," she murmured doubtfully. "It is much more economical than anything—"

She broke off to bow to a stout, red-faced man who, after a rude stare, had greeted her with a patronizing nod. Laverick frowned.

"Who is that fellow?" he asked.

"Mr. Heepman, our stage manager," Zoe answered a little timidly.

"Is there any particular reason why he should behave like a boor?" Laverick continued, raising his voice a little.

She caught at his arm in terror. The man was sitting at the next table.

"Don't, please!" she implored. "He might hear you. He is just behind there."

Laverick half turned in his chair. She guessed what he was about to say, and went on rapidly.

"He has been so foolish," she whispered. "He has asked me so often to go out with him. And he could get me sent away, if he wanted, any time. He almost threatened it the last time I refused. Now that he has seen me with you, he will be worse than ever."

Laverick's face darkened, and there was a peculiar flash in his eyes. The man was certainly looking at them in a vicious manner.

"There are so many of the girls who would be only too pleased to go with him," Zoe continued in a terrified undertone. "I can't think why he bothers me."

"I can," Laverick muttered. "Let's forget about the brute."

But the dinner was already spoiled for Zoe, so Laverick paid the bill a few minutes later, and walked across to the stage door of the theater with her. Her

little hand when she gave it to him at parting was quite cold.

"I'm as nervous as I can be," she confessed. "Mr. Heepman will be watching all the evening for something to find fault with me about."

"Don't you let him bully you," Laverick begged.

"I won't," she promised. "Good-bye. Thanks so much for my dinner."

She turned away with a brave attempt at a smile, but it was only an attempt. Laverick walked on to his club. There was no one in the dining room whom he knew, and the card room was empty. He played one game of billiards, but he played badly. He was upset. His nerves were wrong, he told himself, and little wonder. There seemed to be no chance of a rubber at bridge, so he sallied out again and walked aimlessly toward Covent Garden. Outside the Opera House he hesitated and finally entered, yielding to an impulse the nature of which he scarcely recognized. While he was inquiring about a stall, a small printed notice was thrust into his hand. He read it with a slight start.

We regret to announce that owing to indisposition Mademoiselle Idiale will not be able to appear this evening. The part of Delilah will be taken by Mademoiselle Blanche Temoigne, late of the Royal Opera House, St. Petersburg.

Ten minutes later, Laverick rang the bell of her flat in Dover Street. A strange man servant answered him.

"I came to inquire after Mademoiselle Idiale," Laverick said.

The man held out a tray on which was already a small heap of cards. Laverick, however, retained his.

"I should be glad if you would take mine in to her," he said. "I think it is just likely that she may see me for a moment."

The servant's attitude was one of civil but unconcealed hostility. He would have closed the door had not Laverick already passed over the threshold.

"Madame is not well enough to receive visitors, sir," the man declared. "She shall have your card as soon as possible."

"I should like her to have it now," Laverick persisted, drawing a five-pound note from his pocket.

The man looked at the note longingly. "It would be only waste of time, sir," he declared. "Mademoiselle Idiale is confined to her bedroom and my orders are absolute."

"You are not the man who was here earlier in the day," Laverick remarked. "I wonder," he continued, with a sudden inspiration, "whether you are not Mr. Bellamy's servant?"

"That is so, sir. Mr. Bellamy has sent me here to see that no one has access to Mademoiselle Idiale."

"Then there is no harm whatever in taking in my card," Laverick declared convincingly. "You can put that note in your pocket. I am perfectly certain that Mademoiselle Idiale will see me, and that your master would wish her to do so."

"I will take the risk, sir," the man decided, "but the orders I have received were stringent."

He disappeared and was gone for several moments. When he came back he was accompanied by a pale-faced woman dressed in black, obviously a maid.

"Monsieur Laverick," she said, "Mademoiselle Idiale will receive you. Will you come this way?"

She opened the door of the little reception room, and Laverick followed her. The man returned to his place in the hall.

"Madame will be here in a moment," the maid said. "She will be glad to see you, but she has been very badly frightened."

Laverick bowed sympathetically. The woman herself was gray-faced, terror-stricken.

"It is Monsieur Lassen, the manager of madame, who has caused a great deal of trouble here," she said. "Madame never trusted him, and now we have discovered that he is a spy."

The woman seemed to fade away. The door of the inner room was opened and Louise came out. She was still exceedingly pale, and there were dark rims under her eyes. She came across the

room with outstretched hands. There was no doubt whatever as to her pleasure.

"You have seen Mr. Bellamy?" she asked.

Laverick shook his head. "No, I have seen nothing of Bellamy today. I came to call upon you this afternoon."

She wrung her hands. "You understand, of course!" she exclaimed. "I did not trust Lassen, but I never imagined anything like this. He is an Austrian. Only a few hours ago I learned that he is one of their most heavily paid spies. Streuss got hold of him. But there, I forgot—you do not understand this. It is enough that he laid a plot to get that document from you. Where is it, Mr. Laverick? You have brought it now?"

"Why, no," Laverick answered, "I have not."

Her eyes were round with terror. She held out her hands as though to keep away some tormenting thought.

"Where is it?" she cried. "You have not parted with it?"

"I have not," Laverick replied gravely. "It is in the safe deposit of a hotel to which I have moved."

She closed her eyes and drew a long breath of relief.

"You are not well," Laverick said. "Let me help you to a chair."

She sat down wearily. "Why have you moved to a hotel?" she asked.

"To tell you the truth," Laverick answered, "I seem to have wandered into a sort of modern Arabian Nights. Three times today attempts have been made to get that document from me by force. I have been followed wherever I went. I felt that it was not safe in my chambers, so I moved to a hotel and deposited it in their strong room. I have come to the conclusion that the best thing I can do is to open it tomorrow morning, and decide for myself as to its destination."

Louise sat quite still for several moments. Then she opened her eyes.

"What you say is an immense relief to me, Mr. Laverick," she declared. "I perceive now that we have made a mistake. We should have told you the

whole truth from the first. This afternoon when Mr. Bellamy left me it was to come to you and tell you everything."

Laverick listened gravely. "Really," he said, "it seems to me the wisest course. I haven't the least desire to keep the document. I cannot think why Bellamy did not treat me with confidence from the first—"

He stopped short. Suddenly he understood. Something in Louise's face gave him the hint. "Of course!" he murmured to himself.

"Mr. Laverick," Louise said quietly, "in this matter I am no man's judge, yet as you and I know well that paper could have come into your hands in one way only. There may be some explanation. If so, it is for you to offer it or not as you think best. Mr. Bellamy and I are allies in this matter. It is not our business to interfere with the course of justice. You will run no risk in parting with that paper."

"Where can I see Bellamy?" Laverick inquired, rising and taking up his hat.

"He would go straight to your rooms," she answered. "Did you leave word there where you had gone?"

"Purposely I did not," Laverick replied. "I had better try and find him perhaps."

"It is not necessary," she announced. "There are two sets of spies who follow you everywhere—two sets that I know of. There may be another."

"You think that Bellamy will find me out?" he asked.

"I am sure of it."

"Then I'll go back to the hotel and wait."

She hurried him away, but at the door she detained him for a moment.

"Mr. Laverick," she said, looking at him earnestly, "somehow or other I cannot help believing that you are an honest man."

Laverick sighed. He opened his lips but closed them again. "You are very kind, mademoiselle," he declared simply.

Laverick, as he entered the reception hall at the Milan Hotel, noticed a man leaning over the cashier's desk talking

confidentially to the clerk in charge. The latter recognized Laverick with obvious relief, and at once directed his questioner's attention to him. The man turned swiftly around and without a moment's hesitation came toward Laverick with the apparent intention of accosting him. He was correctly garbed, tall and fair, with every appearance of being a man of breeding. He glanced at Laverick carelessly as he passed, but, as though changing his original purpose, made no attempt to address him. The cashier, who had been watching, gave a little exclamation of surprise and sprang over the counter. He approached Laverick hastily. "Do you know that gentleman just going out, sir?" he asked.

"I never saw him before in my life," Laverick answered.

"Is this your handwriting, sir?" the man inquired.

Laverick read quickly:

TO THE CASHIER, MILAN HOTEL—Deliver to bearer document deposited with you.

STEPHEN LAVERICK.

"It is not," he declared promptly. "It is an impudent forgery. Good God! You don't mean to say that you parted with my property to—"

The cashier stopped his breathless question. "I haven't parted with anything, sir," he said. "I was just wondering what to do when you came in. I'd no reason to believe that the signature was a forgery, but I didn't like the look of it, somehow. We'd better be after him. Come along, sir."

They hurried outside. The man was nowhere in sight. The cashier summoned the head porter.

"A man has just come out," he exclaimed—"tall and fair, very carefully dressed, with a single eyeglass! Which way did he go?"

"He's just driven off in a big Daimler car, sir," the porter answered. "I noticed him particularly. He spoke to the chauffeur in German."

Laverick looked out into the Strand. "Can't we stop him?" he asked rapidly.

The porter smiled as he shook his head. "Not the ghost of a chance, sir.

He shot round the corner there. I heard the police calling to him. I hope there's nothing wrong."

Bellamy came out from the hotel and paused to light a cigarette. "How are you, Laverick?" he said quietly. "Nothing the matter, I hope?"

"Nothing worth mentioning," Laverick replied.

The cashier returned to his duties. The two men were alone. "What about a drink, Laverick?" Bellamy asked nonchalantly.

"Delighted!" Laverick assented.

The two men stepped back into the hotel. They passed into the inner room and, finding it empty, drew two chairs into the further corner. Bellamy summoned the waiter.

"Two whiskies and sodas, quick, Tim," he ordered. "Now, Laverick, listen to me," he added, as the waiter turned away. "We are alone for the moment but it won't be for long. You know very well that it wasn't to renew our schoolboy acquaintance that I've asked you to come in here with me."

Laverick drew a little breath. "Please go on," he said. "I am as anxious as you can be to grasp this affair properly."

"Last Monday," Bellamy went on, leaning forward and speaking in a soft but very distinct undertone, "a man was murdered late at night. The papers called it a mysterious murder. No one knows who the man was or who committed the crime or why. You and I, Laverick, both know a little more than the rest of the world."

"Well?"

Bellamy glanced toward the door—a man had looked in and departed.

"Enough of this fencing, Laverick," he said. "A theft was committed from the person of that murdered man, of which the general public knows nothing. A pocketbook was stolen from him containing twenty thousand pounds and a sealed document. As to who murdered the man, I want you to understand that that is not my affair. As to what has become of that twenty thousand pounds, I have not the slightest curiosity. I want the document."

(To be continued.)

VANITY UNFAIR

By GEORGE JEAN NATHAN

I AM going to ask the New Theater to stay in after school for a few minutes today and listen to something that is on teacher's mind. It probably will not do much good—for two reasons, the first being that the New Theater undoubtedly will believe teacher does not know what he is talking about, and the second being that the New Theater comes from such a rich family that it can be sufficiently independent to tell any old teacher to go chase himself. Nevertheless, discipline is discipline, and when the New Theater persists in putting tacks on the drama's chair and throwing spitballs in the name of art, it is high time for the superimposing of a critical little spanking with unmistakable acoustic properties. Inasmuch as the unruly Central Park West youngster has never had a better friend than I, it is to be hoped that it will regard the spanking in the nature of love taps. Spare the rod and spoil the trousers is no paradox here.

In the first place, the New Theater has—or once did have—ideals. I was assured of this fact at first hand several years ago, and duly chronicled it at the time under my name in the magazine that paid me handsomely for sitting round the office and amusing the stenographers. These ideals, or plans, were the furtherance of the best interests of American drama, the periodic presentation of the classics and the meritorious work of the foreign playwrights, and the molding and casting of a starless, uniformly refulgent company of mummies. In the second of these ideals alone has the New Theater remained true to itself—and then only in part. The first it has forgotten entirely, and the last it

has violated not only in the temporary injection of numerous Broadway thespian "stars" who happened to be devoid of jobs, but in the distinctly trade mart principle of "going halves" on such totally extraneous productions as "A Son of the People" and "Mary Magdalene."

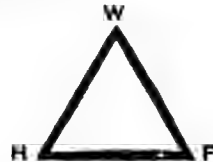
The New Theater, if it still presumes to be accepted on a plane somewhat higher than that occupied by our other theaters, may plead "experiments," "finding itself" and "unavoidable initial mistakes" no longer. It may not pose as a foolish virgin twice. It is old enough to know better. No longer may it give over its splendid stage to such outside drama denters as Olga Nethersole while its own fine artists are enjoying the performances in the downtown theaters; no longer may it sit back in its unfounded, unfair vanity and translate art merely in terms of one fifteen-minute intermission; no longer may it exploit campussy Harvard translations and foreign-just-because-foreign works to the frank disregard of other and better native products. For a complete survey of the New Theater's other sins, from the Sabbatical period of "The Blue Bird" in Columbus Circle to the preliminary and purely money making tours of its player band, I shall refer the reader to the daily papers and other publications. What is aimed at here is simply this: Why does the New Theater continue to avoid everything American? "Oh, it is all very well to chatter on that way," comes back the answer, "but, if you mean American plays, where are we going to get them?" I reply: "Gentlemen, you have neither looked nor tried." Henry B. Harris gets

them and gets good ones; William A. Brady gets them and gets good ones; and so, too, do Tyler and Belasco and some of the other hard workers. Why has not the New Theater followed up young Mr. Sheldon? Why has it not had a serious little *tête-à-tête* with Eugene Walter or William Gillette or Augustus Thomas or Charles Klein or with some of the youngsters like Buchanan and Browne and Patterson and Hopwood? It has the time; it has the money. *Has* it the inclination?

AGAIN I hear the voice from Central Park West. "Teacher," it demands, "could you do better than we have done?" And with characteristic modesty I reply: "Oh, yes, indeed." Three months ago I could and would have secured at least three American made dramas since accepted (and two produced) by other managers. These plays were on the open market, were from well known and tried pens and were thoroughly promising. Names will be furnished for the asking. I would not have lingered so long in arriving at a decision—one way or the other—over the purchase of the American Stratford prize play. I would have put on "The Arrow Maker," good or bad though it be, instead of sacrificing the principles of the institution for a wayfaring foreign troubadour and a vagabond foreign adaptation of "Vanity Fair." If I had produced "Mary Magdalene" at all on my stage, it would have been with the inspiring Edith Wynne Matthison, who revealed her steel in "Sister Beatrice," in the title role. Miss Matthison is a member of the stock company, although the New Theater producers are seemingly often not aware of the fact. To pile Pelleas on Melisande, I would not have used white pigeons to represent blue birds; I would not have used electric bells in Becky Sharp's house; I would not have had the Heidelberg students dress as if they came from Oberlin College; I would not have—oh, but what is the use? A critic always thinks he is so smart! To hear one of them talk you would think he knew something about the theater.

SOME of the persons who have found fault with "THE HAVOC" are like the man who objected to alarm clocks because they always woke him up. If there is one thing above another that New Yorkers dislike, it is to be asked to think. The average New York inhabitant looks on a brain as a strange something that Boston people, the *North American Review* and certain laboratory mason jars have in common. And to his way of looking at things, drama and thought should be as far apart as the two poles and Dr. Cook. "THE HAVOC," by H. S. Sheldon, produced at the Bijou, is an intellect arouser of no mean ring. If it is given you to understand it, you will like it. If it is not given you to understand it, you will turn to your companion after the third act and say: "Gee, I'm sorry we didn't go to see Valeska Suratt instead." It is so much easier to analyze Miss Suratt. All one needs to do so is to drop a dime in the little box on the back of the seat and draw out a sufficient brain on the end of a chain.

"THE HAVOC" is a queer problem in sex geometry. We have the familiar triangle, which we will sketch on the blackboard thus:



It will be observed that the angle W (wife) is equidistant from the angles H (husband) and F (friend). If, however, you have studied up on your dramatic geometry, you know that this is an optical illusion, and that in reality F is much closer to W than H is. It is a paradox in the matter of dramatic triangles that H is always an obtuse angle. This is where "THE HAVOC" is different. H is logically acute, discovers the fact at the very beginning that the line between W and F is much shorter than the law allows, and at once proceeds to find out the why and the wherefore. It is demonstrated to H that the angles W and F have mutually decided to let

geometry go hang and resolve themselves into one; and H, instead of smashing vases, falls into their plan, and the three angles transform themselves into a family circle. "I'll divorce you on one condition," says H to W. "You must let me board with you after you marry, just as I have permitted F to do." W and F agree, and we find H occupying F's former place in the strange household. Soon F, who has been full of elegantly liberal philosophies where love is concerned, reveals to W and ex-H the sham of his midnight creed, and W is finally made to see that the kindergarten principles of love are the only ones that will stand testing.

Fat ladies with tiaras and oily-skinned brokers have been overheard to declare that the play is "silly because it is impossible." These stockyard censors—and their number is legion—are fast becoming a serious menace in the way of the marching individuality and thinking progress of the drama. They insist upon interpreting reason in terms of horse pistols and fact in terms of personal experience alone. "Nothing we know not is!" they proclaim from the housetops. They have as little mental breeding as an upper West Side cotillion leader, as little imagination as a Terrace Garden waiter. They form the pitiable class that calls every play a "show," that refers familiarly to the ladies and gentlemen of the stage by their first names, and that drinks champagne with its rarebit. Mr. Sheldon's really remarkable play is very well presented by Henry Miller, Francis Byrne and Miss Laura Hope Crews.

COMRADE-IN-ARMS Darnton describes Paul Armstrong's and Wilson Mizner's newest play, "THE DEEP PURPLE," as "the best crook drama since 'Deacon Brodie.'" Inasmuch as the latter was produced twenty-five years ago, and inasmuch as at that time I was still serving my critical apprenticeship in reviewing the dramas being presented in our barn and in the neighbors' attics, I am not prepared to bestow upon the play so sweepingly comprehensive a garland. I will venture to add, however, that in my

more modest experience "THE DEEP PURPLE" is the best crook play that has come to my eyes. If you like crook plays—and you certainly do, even if you will not admit it—you will be overjoyed when you go to the Lyric Theater. There are so many crooks on the stage at one time that it looks for all the world like a session of the legislature. There are thieves, confidence men, badgers, hold-up artists, grafting police officers, crooked hotel detectives and lady robbers in ecstatic profusion. "A fine lot of characters!" you sneer. I pay no attention to you. There is a badger game in which an innocent girl is employed as a decoy. "A fine picture to put on the stage!" you sneer again. I pay no attention to you. There is a murderer who slays a man in cold blood. "A pretty thing!" you sniff. I pay no attention to you. The murderer is saved by the hero who swears on his oath that it was a case of suicide. "A nice moral touch!" you nostrilize. I still pay no attention to you. Why do I pay no attention to you? Because if I had not seen the play and if someone had put the plot elements in black and white before mine eyes, I probably should have sneered as you have. Once you see the play, however, you will change your mind. It is the frankest sort of melodrama—or what carpers choose to designate by that term; it is not a study in beautiful morals or Pullman deportment; and it is vulgar in the sense that vulgar means unrefined. But, by the gallery gods above us, it *is* interesting! You may not want to like the play, but you will not be able to help yourself. After the third act you may go out into the lobby and tell Bill Jones that it is "cheap" "common" or "trashy," but you will be back in your seat again two minutes before the curtain goes up on the fourth act because you will be afraid you may miss something. Curiously enough, I have always been one of the small handful of odd persons who believe that a play that succeeds in interesting large cosmopolitan audiences night after night must have something of merit in it. "THE DEEP PURPLE" is such a play. It is not a literary orna-

ment, but it keeps you in your chair from eight thirty until eleven. It may be unrefined, but it is not unclean. My friend William J. Burns, the greatest detective in America today, tells me it is the most accurate picture study of criminals he has ever seen. Another friend, who is a runner for a Wall Street firm and who knows a policeman, tells me, on the contrary, that it is "exaggerated and impossible." Can it be that Mr. Burns is wrong? "THE DEEP PURPLE" is splendidly acted by Jameson Lee Finney, Emmett Corrigan, Miss Ada Dwyer and Richard Bennett.

Charles Frohman's revival of "TRE-LAWNY OF THE 'WELLS,'" with a superb company including Miss Ethel Barrymore, Miss Constance Collier, Miss Louise Drew and the Messrs. Millward, Walcott, D'Orsay and Boniface has uncovered a play as fresh and clear-eyed as when it was first given to the public. The success attendant upon this manager's revivification of the numerous Gillette dramas, "Caste," "The Importance of Being Earnest" and the present play affords a sturdy argument for the speedy installation in New York of his announced permanent repertoire company.

MOST musical comedies may be divided into three classes—first, the kind in which the princess falls in love with the slangy young Pittsburger (always mistermmed an American); second, the kind in which some royal piece of masculinity disguises himself as an antelope or something in order to court a peasant maid; and third, the kind in which the princess changes places for an act with one of the chorus girls to test Prince Pedro's love. Henry Blossom, after reading George Ade's bright little story, took his fountain pen out of the humidor and wished himself into the first class. "THE SLIM PRINCESS" is a first class entertainment in both senses. While conventional, it is crisp, colorful and warm with youth. The music, by Leslie Florodora Stuart, is of the Cohanese lilt, and the comedy is not only part of the story but is as well gratifyingly free from the "I live on Watt Street"—

"What street?"—"Watt Street!" species of jest. The plot treats of the banishment of a princess because she is too slender to suit the lovers of her land, of her consuming love for the usual young Pittsburger, who likes beanpoles best, and of their final mating. The play is staged in the most acceptable Dillingham fashion and actually suggests the tingle of romance, a matter in which musical plays are seldom successful. Miss Elsie Janis is attractive in the stellar role, and gives an imitation of Madame Bernhardt that in its way is quite extraordinary. Joseph Cawthorne has one of those Schloppenhauer parts. The dancing numbers are well arranged and lively.

"OVER NIGHT," by a young man named Bartholomae, is a farcical dramatization of a hotel register on the European plan. Two young couples start off on their honeymoons on a Hudson River steamboat. Just before the steamer leaves the husband of one of the girls and the wife of one of the men run back to the dock to get some baggage that has been mislaid. Toot, toot! They are left behind; and the ill assorted couple are compelled to proceed on their ill assorted honeymoon alone. They are mistaken for man and wife and are immediately pounced upon by the usual lot of asses who believe that a newly entered-into marriage compact is the occasion for much nudging, much suggestiveness in the way of winks and much loud mirth. At the first landing they rush to an inn, where they register as husband and wife and plan to take the first train back to their respective mates. Toot, toot! The last train has gone. And night is upon them! The fat ladies with tiaras and the oily-skinned brokers smile, settle themselves back in their chairs and prepare to eat it up. "Room 32," calls out the clerk as he passes over the key to the supposed newly wedded twain. The fat ladies and the brokers wet their lips and grin. "But," says the young man, "we want *separate* rooms." Whereupon the fat ladies proceed to grunt their complete disgust and the muttering brokers hasten out for a glass of the customary fresh air. Of course at the end every-

thing turns out satisfactorily for everyone except the fat ladies and the oily brokers. "OVER NIGHT," while bearing numerous imprints of the amateur hand, contains a comparatively fresh idea that is managed at times with no little dexterity. The farce suffers, however, from its frequent rambling digressions.

Just before the second night curtain went up on the first act of Edward Knoblauch's play "THE FAUN," at Daly's Theater, two handsomely gowned gentlemen in my rear threatened to disturb the peace of the rest of the audience by entering into a loud and heated argument as to the meaning of the play's title. "A faun is a kind of kid glove," declared one. "And I tell you a faun is a man who acts as a courier in time of war," exclaimed the other. "I'll bet you ten dollars I'm right," returned the first. "Agreed," said the second. "Let's leave it to the man behind us." They turned to the stout party thus designated. "What is a faun?" they asked him. "Gentlemen," said he, "I am afraid you both lose. A faun is a sort of vegetable that grows in Ceylon." Then the curtain rose and all bets were declared off, for the three men and the rest of New York were informed through the person of William Faversham that a faun was less a god of fields and shepherds, as mythological authorities have believed, than a matinee idol without his underwear. Maxine Elliott in her "Under the Greenwood Tree" bathing suit, Sothorn's naughty knees in "Macbeth" and Marie Doro's physical frankness in "Friquet" must now relegate themselves into oblivion before the Turkish bath-costumed Faversham. Beside him even a "Follies" chorus girl must look the clothes horse. Mr. Faversham is the barest thing that has shown itself upon our stage since "Mr. and Mrs. Daventry." The play in which this brave actor appears, while following the recipe made familiar by Franz Molnar, is still sufficiently novel and still sufficiently witty to merit wide indorsement. Its lines are the freshest, most biting and smile teasing to be heard in the entire round of the current metropolitan pres-

entations. As the financially weakened Lord Stonbury presses a suicidal gun to his temple, there comes to him the faun who tells him it would be amusingly silly to kill himself when so many good tips on the races are lying around loose. The faun, being in direct communication with the entire animal kingdom, can tell Stonbury in advance what horses will win the Derby just as easily as if he were one of the stewards. In return for these tips Stonbury agrees to deck the faun out in evening clothes and introduce him into the high circles of society. That is where the play begins. And it ends after the faun, posing as Prince Silvani, has awakened in the social mannikins their true and honest natures. He shows the women, with the aid of a mouse, that, with all the effort in the conventional world they cannot hide their natural feelings. He proves to the men, with the aid of his tips, that they are all money grubbers, from a judge in the high courts down to the measliest valet. He draws the repressed love out of one woman's heart and he instils in another's forgiveness for her eloping daughter. "I plead for naturalness, for true feeling—and in the end you each and everyone must obey me," is his message. And when all is done he jumps back over the hedge whence he came, throws off the coverings of what he sneers is "civilization," and starts across the wet meadows to meet the coming dawn. I can suggest the intrinsic manner of the play in no better way than to quote, from memory, a bit of the dialogue.

The faun approaches one of the painted grand dames. "I hate you!" she cries. "You treat us as if we were animals."

"And is it not a fine thing," smiles the faun, "to be an animal? You are, you men and women all are, only animals."

"Women," comes the reply, "may be animals—but ladies never!"

Mr. Faversham, in the leading role, gives as interesting a performance as he has had to his credit. The rest of the company, however, is not as efficient as might be wished, although Miss Julie Opp is to be praised for a rather careful

bit of work in the part of Lady Alexandra. Miss Elise Oldham, as Vivian Hope-Clark, and Martin Sabine, as Stonbury, are quite horrid. But, with all its faults of presentation, "THE FAUN" receives my hearty approval. It is the sort of play that makes a reviewer's life seem something less tedious than that of a plumber.

The announcement of a "labor play" usually carries with it the insinuation that an audience is going to have hard work on its hands. Somehow or other, after one has enjoyed the copious seven o'clock meal, has enveloped his body in fine raiment and has hied him to the playhouse to spend a pleasant and more or less carefree evening, he finds it supremely arduous to work up any compassion under his pleats for a lot of poor, dirty, working muckers who insist they be paid \$1.60 a day instead of \$1.55, and who, when their wicked employer says he cannot afford the raise, steal two whole acts to talk about their "rights." Not that I, for one, do not love the workingman! Not that I do not appreciate the fact that without him the nation and the *New York Journal* would pass out of existence! Not that I do not admire the finesse with which he digs sewers, becomes a ward politician and then gets fat contracts to redig the sewers. I love the workingman, but in his proper place. In the theater, save in such rare cases as "Strife," he gets on my nerves. C. M. S. McClellan, whose "Leah Kleschna" made mighty fine drama and whose "Belle of New York" made mighty sprightly pastime, is the latest playwright to have championed the cause of the laborers. In "JUDITH ZARAINÉ," previously called "The Strong People," he interests himself in the working host of a Pennsylvania mining community, calls out the militia to do a little human target practice and then, through a girl of the common people and a man of the preferred, brings about a final adjustment of the usual \$1.60. Miss Lena Ashwell delineates Judith.

"THE SCARECROW," Percy Mackaye's latest venture out of the library into the theater, has proved eminently more satisfactory from a dramatic point of

view than his previous "Anti-Matrimony" literary tilt in the proscenium tournament. Gleaning his idea from Hawthorne's "Feathertop," Mackaye has woven a curiously interesting fantastic romance around the character of the scarecrow whom the devil infuses with life. What the devil does for the scarecrow Henry B. Harris does for "THE SCARECROW," for with all due appreciation of the Mackaye literary worth it is only fair to record that without the careful and discreet staging that has been loaned it the manuscript would be dramatically lifeless. Viewed as it stands, however, with its able interpretation by Frank Reicher and generally good support, with its splendid stage management, with its suave lighting and cautious production, "THE SCARECROW" may be set down as a decidedly meritorious literary-dramatic effort, worth anyone's while to see.

The inauguration of "CHANTECLER" in America proved to be the occasion for a general indulgence in two forms of sport—first, figuring out how much better than Maude Adams Otis Skinner would have been in the principal role, and second, figuring out just what the play meant. The extent to which the first progressed may be best expressed in the statement that Mr. Skinner received as many good newspaper "notices" for "CHANTECLER" as did Mrs. Fiske for the New Theater's presentation of "Vanity Fair." The extent to which the second went could be expressed fully only with the aid of a dozen stenographers. Although, to be sure, any number of hidden meanings may be read into the Rostand text by persons who like to go in for that kind of thing, the consensus of the sort of opinion that does not require bromoseltzer to clear its head seems to agree that what symbolism there is in the play is merely a veil for our old grammar school friend, "Pride goeth before a fall." But, hark ye! Whatever its faults, the Frohman production of the barnyard drama remains one of the finest spectacles, one of the most interesting dramatic curiosities of your day and mine.

A STACK OF NOVELS

By H. L. MENCKEN

LET us plunge into the novels, good and bad. Some of them have been reposing in odd corners of my laboratory so long that they are covered with cobwebs and fall to pieces as I lift them. I shall take them as they come, beginning with one of the worst of them.

"THE FRUIT OF DESIRE," which is by some person who hides beneath the pseudonym of Virginia Demarest (*Harpers*, \$1.20), is one of those solemn and piffish tales which the newspaper reviewers of the hinterland describe as "strong" and "virile" and "thoughtful." The hero is falsely accused of theft and unjustly punished for it; the heroine is falsely accused of unchastity and unjustly punished for it. The two gallop to New York together and are there mistaken for man and wife, though there has been no marriage, legal or actual. The door remains locked; it is a merely soulful union. After a year or so, however, they yield to the promptings of the devil and are duly joined in holy wedlock. Unpleasantness follows—psychological and obstetrical. The man nearly dies of jealousy; the woman nearly dies of what seems to be unskillful surgery. They see a light; they will go back to joint celibacy. Says she: "We are going to try for the highest." Says he: "It is the only way." Such, at least, is my understanding of the story. It was hard reading, believe me. Its characters are entirely incredible. Its machinery creaks. Its philosophy is wind. It is flapdoodle.

Let us breathe cleaner air! It is in "THE PRODIGAL PRO TEM," an unpretentious and diverting yarn of the best seller type by Frederick Orin Bartlett

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(*Small-Maynard*, \$1.50). Old Man Van Patten, blind and at the gates of death, yearns to rest his hand once more upon the head of Joseph, his prodigal son. But Joseph is far away, somewhere in the Alaskan wilds, and all the letters and telegrams sent to him are returned marked "Not at." Then appears Barnes, Jr., a roving young artist. Barnes, Jr., volunteers to ease the old man's agonies by substituting for Joe, and the gentle deed is done. Then Barnes, Jr., makes love to Joe's sister, the beautiful Eleanor; Joe himself bobs up; Van Patten, Sr., recovers—and the whole gang is happy. A pleasant and harmless story, with lively dialogue in it and not a little humor.

Henry James and George Barr McCutcheon! Well, why not? They are both artists, and each has his venerated disciples, his school. The only essential difference between them is that one is a good artist and the other a bad one. The James book is a collection of five short stories, published under the title of "THE FINER GRAIN" (*Scribners*, \$1.50). In the first of them, "The Velvet Glove," we see how John Berridge, a brilliant young American dramatist, "tastes in their fullness the sweets of success." Lolling at his ease in Paris, he is sought out by a young lord—just *what* lord we never find out—who talks to him eloquently about a princess—name also unknown—who yearns to meet him. Berridge glows; he is in full reaction against the democracy of his native soil; it will please him vastly to rub noses with this blooded and exquisite creature. But alas and alack, what bitterness awaits! The princess it turns out has literary ambitions. She has written

gushy best sellers under the name of "Amy Evans." She wants Berridge to do a log rolling preface for her next one. The poor fellow, aghast, backs away. "Why write romances?" he demands. "You *are* Romance. . . . Don't attempt such base things. Leave those to us. Only live. Only be. *We'll* do the rest." And then he kisses her and takes to his heels, a disillusioned and suffering man. A good story. A story capitably told. Easy reading? Perhaps not. But a lot of very fine music, it may be recalled, is not easy listening.

The McCutcheon volume is "THE ROSE IN THE RING" (*Dodd-Mead*, \$1.50), a tale of love making and villainizing in a circus. It is fashionable to take a hack at Mr. McCutcheon, to make game of his heroes, to sneer at his popular success. I refrain for two reasons. In the first place, I believe that he is doing his darnedest, which is more than may be said at times for some of his rivals—Mr. Chambers, for example; and in the second place, I hold that it is not at all disgraceful to please the pit. After all the pit is sometimes right and the stalls wrong. Do you remember Dorante's speech to the silly Marquess in "La Critique de l'École des Femmes"? It is really Molière himself that speaks. "Then you, Marquess," he begins scornfully, "are one of those fine gentlemen who won't admit that the pit has any common sense, and would be mortified to laugh with it, even if the play were the best in the world. . . . I beg you to learn, my dear Marquess, that in the theater common sense has no exclusive abode. The difference between half a louis and fifteen sous has nothing to do with good taste; for either sitting or standing you may judge badly." Again, the poet Lysidas is bombarded: "I should like to know whether the great rule of all rules is not to please, and if a play which attains that end has not traveled a good road? Can the entire public be mistaken?" Lysidas gave it up. So do I.

A writer who seems to make regular oscillations between the brave sentiment of "The Newcomes" and the depressing indecency of "Dodo" is E. Temple

Thurston, the English author of "THE GREATEST WISH IN THE WORLD" (*Kennerley*, \$1.50). In "Sally Bishop," his last novel, he was dodoizing and doing it badly; in "THE GREATEST WISH IN THE WORLD" he is newcoming, and doing it very well indeed. We have here the simple story of Peggy Bannister, foundling. Father O'Leary finds her one day in his dismal chapel of Corpus Christi in Maiden Lane, bawling lustily for one so tiny, and takes her home to his presbytery, where his housekeeper, the excellent Mrs. Parfitt, makes shift to give the little stranger succor. Thereafter we follow Peggy down the years, until at last a sailor lover, young Stephen Gale, claims her for his own. But it is Father O'Leary and not Peggy herself who will stick in memory—Father O'Leary, that sentimental fellow, with his celibate's habit and his fairy godfather's heart. Something of Thackeray's mellowness is in the tale.

We are again among the gentler moods in "ADVENTURES IN FRIENDSHIP" by David Grayson (*Doubleday-Page*, \$1.50), a book in which most of the characters are humble village folk and most of the discourse is upon the abiding joys of friendliness and neighborliness and simple faith. It is difficult to write such stuff without growing maudlin, but Mr. Grayson does it. You will like his book. It has hope in it, that divine thing which life knocks out of most of us. "THE UNLIVED LIFE OF LITTLE MARY ELLEN," by Ruth McEnery Stuart (*Bobbs-Merrill*, \$1.00), comes closer to the dangerous brink of sentimentality. It is the story of a bride deserted at the altar. Crazed by that adventure, she fancies that she is married and a mother. An ancient wax doll is her child. She nurses it tenderly for years and it goes with her to the grave. Very, very sweet. "THE SINGING MOUSE," by Emerson Hough (*Bobbs-Merrill*, \$1.00), drops us frankly into the wallow. A man's memories of his lost youth, of half-forgotten companions, of old dreams. It might have been poetry—but Mr. Hough is no poet.

The newspaper reviewers have come down rather heavily upon "THE DOCTOR'S CHRISTMAS EVE," by James Lane

Allen (*Macmillan*, \$1.50). A number of them dismiss it out of hand as an allegory which defies understanding; others find fault with its style; and at least one of them denounces it for pornography. Let us be less harsh. The story, it must be admitted, is very far from a masterpiece, but all the same it offers us an interesting picture of an old time country doctor, and has in it much pleasant writing in praise of Kentucky. The serious idea at the bottom of it seems to be this: that a loveless marriage is an exceedingly disagreeable affair, even unto the second generation. As for the symbolism, the esoteric meaning, the allegory, I leave all that to the masters of such things. A pair of incredibly precocious children give the story a fantastic touch.

In "THE EAGLE'S FEATHER," by Emily Post (*Dodd-Mead*, \$1.50), we consort, as in this author's earlier books, with the first aristocrats of Europe. But it is a great dramatist, Jan Piotrovski by name, and not a noble lord, that is the hero of the tale. Jan seeks to inflame his imagination with love, and so sets up housekeeping with Vera de Marsin, the Hungarian widow of a Latin Quarter duke. But he quickly finds that his passion for Vera, instead of helping him to make a great play of "Ysulinde," which he has on the stocks, rather tends to interfere with his work. A sad dilemma; the artist and the lover clash. Then Vera dies—and Jan, it is to be presumed, goes back to his desk.

A somewhat similar conflict appears in "SON OF THE WIND," by Lucia Chamberlain (*Bobbs-Merrill*, \$1.50), but here the artist is no manicured and frock-coated dramatist but the champion bronco buster of the world. Hearing of a stallion that no human being has ever dared to mount, he goes in search of it, proposing to spring upon its back, dig his spurs into its hams, reduce it to docility—and get his portrait upon the first page of the *Police Gazette*. A girl stands in the way. She knows where the wonderful beast is to be found, but she doesn't want to see it conquered and so she refuses to tell. But the bronco buster makes love to her and she yields,

and then he proceeds to his grim work killing the horse in the process and narrowly missing death himself. As he opens his eyes the girl's arms are around his neck and she is telling him that she loves him better than any old horse that ever lived. A muddled and rather tedious tale.

Yarns of mystery! Four of them are in "THE GUILLOTINE CLUB," by S. Weir Mitchell (*Century Co.*, \$1.50), and all four are good ones. Like Kipling's "The House Surgeon," two of them leave the reader puzzled at the end. A lot of ingenuity is in these tales, and the good doctor writes with unfailing grace and plausibility. "THE BAINBRIDGE MYSTERY," by Grace Tyler Pratt (*Sherman-French*, \$1.20), is less skillfully set forth, but all the same it is a nerve racking story and connoisseurs of that sort of thing will probably enjoy it. In "THE SHEARS OF DESTINY," by Leroy Scott (*Doubleday-Page*, \$1.50), we are transported to Russia, that eternally mysterious land, and become involved in the doings of its army corps of spies and secret agents. Henry Drexel, the young American, arrives at St. Petersburg in no easy frame of mind, for he is escorting his fair cousin Alice Howard, whom he thinks he loves, and Alice is soon to be married to Prince Berloff, that magnificent barbarian. Then ensue the adventures. In the last chapter Henry is still gloomy, for by now he has fallen in love with the Princess Valenko, who, being an ardent patriot, refuses to marry him until Russia is free—an event apparently far in the future. However, Alice has been saved from Berloff—and we have had a very exciting time in St. Petersburg.

"THE IMPOSTER," by John Reed Scott (*Lippincott*, \$1.50), is an engaging romance of old Annapolis, with a number of interesting personages in it and a conscientious handling of the facts of history. The social life of the ancient Maryland capital is depicted with charm. In "THE VICAR OF THE MARSHES," by Clinton Scollard (*Sherman-French*, \$1.20), we go back to the Italy of noble poisoners and warlike popes. There is plenty of movement in

the tale, but the thought will not down that the author is more successful in his poetry than in his rococo romances. Yet more history is in "THE PURCHASE PRICE," by Emerson Hough (*Bobbs-Merrill*, \$1.50), the second volume of an ambitious American trilogy, of which "54-40 or Fight" was the first. The scenes are laid in Missouri in the days before the Civil War, and the wild life of that remote and turbulent country is described. A beautiful adventuress from overseas, recalling the baroness of "54-40," is one of the principal personages.

No doubt "SECOND STRING" will disappoint most of the admirers of Anthony Hope (*Doubleday-Page*, \$1.50), for we have here neither brilliant dialogue nor the stupendous doings of a Rassendyl. The story is rather slow moving and most of its characters are commonplace English types. In its way it is well done, but one is constantly reminded, so to speak, that it is not Hopeful. Back to Zenda! "THE ANNALS OF ANN," by Kate Trimble Sharber (*Bobbs-Merrill*, \$1.50), purports to be a diary kept by "a girl at the gawky age." Naturally enough, the subject of love is discussed exhaustively—and, let it be said for Mrs. Sharber, with considerable humor. Still better humor is in "MR. INGLE-SIDE," a fantastic and discursive tale by E. V. Lucas (*Macmillan*, \$1.50). Ingle-side himself is a delightful fellow—a middle-aged Englishman, high in the Civil Service, who lives apart from his wife because he is happier thus; but more delightful still are Ann his daughter, who comes to live with him, Miss Ming, the dealer in curios, Sarah Wyborn, the nurse turned shopkeeper, Antoinette, that wholesale writer of letters, and half a dozen other quaint folk. Properly speaking, it is not a story at all but a panorama of pleasant people—with a dissertation, at the end, upon the mottoes suitable for sundials! A rambling, genial, happy book.

Honest sentiment has its innings in "DIXIE HART," by Will N. Harben (*Harpers*, \$1.50). Here we have certain chapters from the life story of Alf Henley, storekeeper in a little Georgia town. Alf marries a widow of the vicinage and set-

tles down to the humdrum life of a virtuous family man. But in the course of time his eyes begin to turn longingly toward Dixie Hart, a pretty neighbor. Dixie looks back, blinking kindly at Alf—but no, there is no scandal. The love of these simple peasants heartens and sustains them; it puts poetry into their humdrum lives; it makes them stronger and better. In the end it turns out that Alf's wife has an antecedent husband living; the good lady takes to her heels—and Alf and Dixie meet in that antenuptial embrace with which all orthodox American novels end.

Three stories of decidedly larger caliber are "THE SHADOW OF A TITAN," by A. F. Wedgwood (*Lane*, \$1.50), "FLAMSTED QUARRIES," by Mary E. Waller (*Little-Brown*, \$1.50), and "THE END OF THE RAINBOW," by Stella M. Düring (*Lippincott*, \$1.50)—particularly the first. We have here a full length character sketch of a South American dictator, not in the low comedy manner of O. Henry or the high school manner of Richard Harding Davis, but in what is not far from the careful, analytical, artistic manner of Joseph Conrad. The story ill bears condensation; it is crowded with incident and observation; its canvas is as wide as the Atlantic. A book out of the ordinary. An inordinately long book, but an unusually entertaining one. "FLAMSTED QUARRIES" deals with mere Americans—the Anglo-Saxon Americans of yesterday and the Latin and Slav Americans of tomorrow—and with their clashing ideals and ambitions. Secondly, it preaches the gospel of redemption by hard work. Miss Waller forges ahead; her work gains in character. "THE END OF THE RAINBOW" is a study in disillusionment—the central figure being a young girl who passes through romantic idealism and heartbreak to a true sense of the realities.

The name of Mitchell Kennerley, one of the younger and more adventurous publishers of New York, has come to be associated with thoughts of excellent books, but in "THE END OF DREAMS," by Wood Levette Wilson (*Kennerley*, \$1.50), he departs from his usual policy

and tries to tempt us with literary lobsouse. The story deals amateurishly and incredibly with a man who is really two men—the one an honest (if dishwatery) fellow who harbors a virtuous passion for the fair Beatrice Collamer, and the other a scoundrel who tries to steal her jewels. We see the honest fellow pursue his felonious shadow; we see the two come face to face, and we see the shadow disappear in “a blinding flash of lightning that seemed to fill the room with blue flame.” Then the arms of Beatrice go snaking around the neck of the moral survivor, and pulling down his head to the level of her own, she implants an extremely agreeable buss upon his face. Little is to be said for Mr. Wilson, but that little I say gladly, to wit: he is a good speller.

To Warrington Dawson, author of “THE SCOURGE” (*Small-Maynard*, \$1.50), rather more may be allowed, for beside being an accomplished speller he is also worthy of praise for his good intentions. In “THE SCOURGE” he seems to be attempting a serious study of life in a small Southern town today—an enterprise which no other Southern author has courage enough to undertake, for the South is very touchy and the muckraker goes promptly to the stake. But it is one thing to take aim at a duck and quite another thing to bring it down. Mr. Dawson misses because he is armed with a penny popgun. In other words, his equipment for novel writing is pathetically inadequate. He writes stilted and irritating dialogue; his characters are utterly lacking in reality; he shows little if any capacity for inventing situations; he is constantly spoiling his story in the telling. He is tedious, not because he is obscure but because he is empty. One discovers in the end that he has not actually written a novel, but has merely made a gallant and hopeless attempt. The canned review on the cover says that Colonel Roosevelt is one of Mr. Dawson’s admirers. It would not surprise me in the least to hear that Colonel Roosevelt also admires Hamilton Wright Mabie and Orison Swett Marden.

In “MAX,” by Katherine Cecil Thurston (*Harpers*, \$1.50), an entirely

incredible story is told with a degree of skill worthy of a better cause. Max, the hero-heroine, is a young Russian princess who decides that being a woman is a woeful matter, and so flees to Paris disguised as a boy. On the way she is befriended by an Irishman of middle age, a man learned in the ways of the studios. She falls in love with him at once, and prompted by that love reveals herself to him as Maxine, the sister of Max. It is a long while before Ned Blake sees through the fascinating little devil’s deception. Here is the thing that is hard to swallow, for Ned, as an old Parisian, must be assumed to have an extremely keen eye for what the biologists call secondary sexual characters. But who demands probability or even possibility in a best seller—so long as it kills dull care? This gratifying murder “MAX” achieves. So does “THE SIEGE OF THE SEVEN SUITORS,” by Meredith Nicholson (*Houghton-Mifflin*, \$1.20), another extravagant but diverting tale. The slave of a despotic and superstitious aunt, Cecilia Hollister is compelled to accept the seventh man who offers her his heart and hand. How so to manage it that No. 7 shall be the lucky fellow who is No. 1 in her maiden meditations? Well, it is managed, and many other amusing things are managed, too. A farce with plenty of movement.

Fun of a higher order is to be found in “THE MARRIED LIFE OF THE FREDERIC CARROLLS,” a pleasant and pungent social comedy by Jesse Lynch Williams (*Scribners*, \$1.50). We make acquaintance with the Carrolls just as the honeymoon reaction strikes them and they learn that there is more to marriage than billing and cooing. Thereafter we follow them for a dozen years, observing their joys and sorrows and leaving them in the end at the gates of middle age. We see them get on in the world; we meet their relatives and friends; we behold them struggling with the infernal problems of house building. Once Frederic is almost carried off by a Siren and we hold breath while Molly rescues him. Another time Molly herself has an appalling affair with a brother-in-law. It is a novel and entertaining story, well imagined and

well written, and the Carrolls are near enough to the American mean to give it some value as a study of a typical marriage in this our fair land. The problems of matrimony also appear in "THE CONFESSION OF A REBELLIOUS WIFE," by some anonymous fictioneer (*Small-Maynard*, 50 cents) and in "THE DIARY OF MY HONEYMOON," by another shrinking scrivener (*Macaulay*, \$1.50). The first has an air of genuineness; the wife in rebellion tells her story simply and impressively. The second is balderdash.

"BERENICE," by E. Phillips Oppenheim (*Little-Brown*, \$1.50), tells a story of requited but hopeless love. John Matravers, a famous dramatist, conceives an ardent affection for Berenice What's-her-name, an actress made famous by his skill, and she returns it compounded. But they cannot marry, for Berenice has a husband living, a scoundrelly fellow who will not die. What to do? Berenice offers herself to Matravers, husband or no husband, and at first he agrees to take her, but soon he perceives the folly of it. It will mean the ruin of both. He prefers death—and so commits suicide. Berenice chooses the greater sacrifice of living on. "THE GIFT OF THE GRASS," by John Trotwood Moore (*Little-Brown*, \$1.50), is the autobiography of a famous pacer—to wit, Hal Rointer, 2.04½. But there are human personages in the tale, too, and they make love after the fashion of their kind. The Middle Basin of Tennessee—"the dimple of the universe"—is the scene. "THE SPREAD EAGLE," by Gouverneur Morris (*Scribners*, \$1.20), is a collection of thirteen of the author's short stories—and excellent are some of the short stories that Mr. Morris writes, as those who remember "Putting on the Screws" will stoutly maintain.

Finally, and to make an end of fiction, we come to "HER HIGHNESS," by some person or persons unknown to the jury (*Badger*, \$1.50), a dull and incredible tale of mistaken identity; "THE ROAD TO PROVIDENCE," by Maria Thompson Daviess (*Bobbs-Merrill*, \$1.50), the sentimental story of a great singer who, on losing her voice, goes to a

quiet Tennessee village for rest, and there gets it back again and a husband with it; "THE MAYOR OF NEW YORK," by L. P. Gratacap (*Dillingham*, \$1.50), a preposterous romance of the future, in the last chapter of which the Pope moves from Rome to Staten Island, apparently that he may officiate at the marriage of the hero and heroine; "PLUPY, THE REAL BOY," by Henry A. Shute (*Badger*, \$1.50), a sort of continuation of "The Real Diary of a Real Boy," in which we follow that famous youngster through many new and amusing adventures; "MY BROTHER'S KEEPER," by Charles Tenney Jackson (*Bobbs-Merrill*, \$1.50), an extremely disappointing second novel by the author of "The Day of Souls"; "THE PATH OF HONOR," by Burton E. Stevenson (*Lippincott*, \$1.50), a workmanlike and interesting historical tale in the manner of 1890, with Revolutionary France as its scene; and "AS THE GODS DECREE," by Daniel Henry Morris (*Broadway Pub. Co.*, \$1.50), a well meant but somewhat ponderous effort to picture the life of the Romans.

Two very sightly little volumes of essays come next, each made up of selections from the critical work of a poet recently dead, and each edited and introduced by Edward J. O'Brien. The first is "A RENEGADE POET AND OTHER ESSAYS," by Francis Thompson (*Ball*, \$1.25), and the other is "THE MAN FORBID," by John Davidson (*Ball*, \$1.25). Thompson died in a London hospital in 1907, after a life spent chiefly in the gutter; Davidson committed suicide a year ago, having found existence too bitter a dose for his palate. Thompson's essays are of considerable interest as revealing the esthetic creed of a poet of undoubted worth, but too often they are marred by a silly striving for the startling phrase. In one place, for example, one reads that "all beauty is passionate, though it may be passionless passion." Here we have a combination of an untruth and an imbecility, and yet poor Thompson probably thought he had achieved an epigram. Such epigrams are easy to manufacture, as Mr. Chesterton has often demonstrated. Elsewhere Thompson is less artificial and more intelligible. In

one essay he argues that Cervantes wrote "Don Quixote," not to kill chivalry with guffaws, for it was already dead, but to voice a "secret but lofty contempt" for the materialism that had killed it. "At the deepest core of the strange and wonderful satire, in which the hidden mockery is so opposite to the seeming mockery, lies a sympathy even to tears with all height and heroism insulated and out of date and mad to the eyes of a purblind world." An ingenious theory! Davidson's essays are more commonplace and show in general little critical insight. Some of them are plainly pot boilers. A number of Fleet Street eclogues in prose, hitherto unpublished between covers, accompany them.

The impression that one gathers from "HUNTING WITH THE ESKIMOS," by Harry Whitney (*Century Co.*, \$3.50), is that the sport is scarcely worth the trouble. Mr. Whitney went North with Peary in the summer of 1908, dropped ashore at Etah on the west coast of Greenland and remained there for a whole year, fighting off chilblains and vermin, chasing the walrus, the arctic hare and the musk ox, and longing for a square meal. During the dark, dank arctic winter he turned a greenish yellow hue, grew bald and came near losing his feet, fingers and nose. It was not until the spring of 1909 that he actually got a chance at musk oxen, the kingly game of those parts. He found them on the heights of Ellesmere Land, many miles across Smith Sound. When his sledge dogs flushed them they took to the glassy hummocks and he had to scramble after them. Facing them at last, he killed thirteen of them in a few moments. The great, innocent beasts simply stood there like steers and gulped the lethal lead. The chief danger to the hunter was that of slipping on the ice. Better sport was had with the walrus and norwhal, and there was plenty of good duck and hare shooting. But one wonders, on closing the book, why a man should immerse himself in Eskimo filth for a whole year and lose acres of cuticle and miss a lot of good shows, all for the sake of slaughtering

a few inoffensive cattle. Mr. Whitney tells his story simply and modestly, but he glosses over the most interesting parts of it. One memorable day Dr. Frederick A. Cook stalked into his camp—"half starved, thin and terribly dirty." Of Cook's story not a word is repeated. A month or two later Commander Peary appeared. Again a discreet silence!

A fat and juicy book is "IN AFRICA," by John T. McCutcheon, the Chicago cartoonist (*Bobbs-Merrill*, \$4.00). It must weigh fully four pounds, one of which is accounted for by the innumerable illustrations—photographs, maps and pen drawings by the author. Mr. McCutcheon went to Africa not so much to drench its soil with the blood of its fauna as to have a high old time, and a high old time he had, and his story of it makes extremely diverting reading. He met Colonel Roosevelt on the Nzoia River and was but eight miles away when the Colonel and Kermit achieved their historic massacre of elephants. Kermit came galloping into the McCutcheon camp howling for salt, and soon the embalmers of both expeditions were hard at work salting down the slain. Later on the Colonel favored the assembled multitude with an anecdote. It concerned an elephant that he had recently assassinated and then abandoned in the jungle. When he went back to the carcass, he said, he found the head of a live hyena protruding from the dead pachyderm's corporation. Nearby was a gaping wound, at least eighteen inches in diameter. The hyena had eaten its way in by one route and was coming out by another! Such was the tale that Bwana Tumbo told, sitting by his campfire on the Nzoia River. It is but one of many amazing tales in a book that is sure to please. Mr. McCutcheon writes briskly and entertainingly; he went through Africa with his eyes open. And at the end of his book there is a chapter of detailed advice and information for anyone who cares to follow in his footsteps.

Winthrop Peckard's "FLORIDA TRAILS" (*Small-Maynard*, \$2.00) is the narrative of a naturalist's winter wan-

derings in the most colorful and romantic of all American States. Who, having once seen them, ever forgets those languid, twilight streams, with their Gothic arches of gnarled trees; those hard white beaches, incandescent by day and phosphorescent by night; those spectroscopic sunrises; those "soft, lascivious stars"? It is not at Palm Beach that Florida is most beautiful, nor even at St. Augustine, but along the lonely reaches of the coast, where the palm trees come down to the water, as they do along the Spanish Main, and the wild things of the tropics are undisturbed by the cacophony of hotel orchestras and the sickening odors of talcum powder, cigarettes and false hair. It is into this lovely wilderness that Mr. Packard takes us, his eye alert for snake and butterfly, bird and flower. The trip is well worth making with him. He knows his Indian River as the Seminoles knew it; the eternal spell of the tropics is upon him; he writes pleasantly and understandingly. Incidentally his book is full of illustrations which do great credit to the printer. They are simple halftones from photographs, printed in but one color, but not a few of them have the depth and richness of etchings. Mr. Packard is also the author of "WOOD WANDERINGS" (*Small-Maynard* \$1.20), whose title sufficiently describes it.

We are still out of doors in "MY GRANDMOTHER'S GARDEN," by Mary Matthews Bray (*Badger*, \$1.00), and "OCTOBER VAGABONDS," by Richard Le Gallienne (*Kennerley*, \$1.50). The former is made up of two pleasant little essays upon old-fashioned flowers and old time orchards, and the latter is the story of an autumn walking tour through New York State. Mr. Le Gallienne's walking companion was an artist, and the pair swallowed many a savory country dinner on the way and discoursed with many a simple peasant and stopped to listen to many a bird and fell flat upon their façades to drink from many an upland rill. They drank, alas, once too often, for toward the end of their long route the artist began to grow bilious and dizzy and had to be brought to New York by train. It was typhoid fever,

and for several weeks it kept him to his bed. The name of this artist doth not appear, but I have no doubt that he was Thomas Fogarty, the illustrator of the book. It is an extremely pretty book, printed and bound in Mr. Kennerley's best manner, and here and there its prose rises into a song.

Le Gallienne again—this time as essayist. The book is called "ATTITUDES AND AVOWALS" (*Lane*, \$1.50) and it includes a number of the fanciful and charming papers which the author has contributed during the past few years to the SMART SET. Accompanying them are various reviews—of Stephen Phillips's plays, of Sidney Lanier's poetry, of Arthur Symonds's criticism; of Maurice Hewlett's various styles, of Hawthorne's novels. A book to pick up and put down; a book for converting idle half-hours into profitable ones. Another volume of essays is the "CONSTRAINED ATTITUDES" of Frank M. Colby (*Dodd-Mead*, \$1.20). Mr. Colby chatters amiably about all things under the sun, from the morals of Hedda Gabler to the flubdubbery of the British weeklies. I am unable to report that he says anything likely to be preserved for long in the great storehouse of human thought.

THREE MODERN SEERS—

by Mrs. Havelock Ellis.

(*Kennerley*, \$1.25)

Brief accounts of the principal writings of James Hinton, Edward Carpenter and Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche.

WHAT EIGHT MILLION WOMEN WANT— by Rheta Childe Dorr.

(*Small-Maynard*, \$2.00)

The story of the woman's club movement in the United States, with particular reference to the great campaign for the rescue of the working girl.

THE AUTOMOBILE—

by Robert Sloss.

(*Outing Pub. Co.*, \$1.25)

A little book of valuable pointers in the selection, care and use of a motor car.

SHOPPING FOR THE SMART SET

By MARION C. TAYLOR

THE writer will be glad to offer suggestions or answer questions regarding shopping and the New York shops. Readers of the SMART SET inquiring for names of shops where articles described are purchasable should inclose a stamped self-addressed envelope for reply, and state page and month.

NOW comes that delightful season of expectancy and surprises when everyone's curiosity is aroused and new things are simply pouring into the country from abroad. To be sure, it is early for gowns, hats, wraps, etc., as many of the buyers for the great houses have just sailed or are on the other side now. But silks, chiffons and dress and suit materials of all descriptions are here, and a few suits, wraps and hats have already found their way over.

I feel twice a year about the fashions much as I do four times a year about the seasons. I welcome them with open arms, and in fashions I find many things to commend, usually coming to the conclusion that *never* were things so pretty or so becoming as at *this* particular season. Pessimists on every side declare that they cannot see how anyone can wear some of the dreadful things sent over to us—or made up over here, for that matter. I can't either, but possibly my neighbor in the bus is wondering the same about my clothes, so why dwell on these points when there are hosts of beautiful things on every hand?

Cottons

It surely sounds simple and inexpensive enough, but to wander through the department in one of the largest New York shops certainly proves that the term "cottons" is a snare and a de-

lusion. For it includes everything imaginable from really simple checks and stripes to the most exquisitely beautiful color combinations, beaded effects and the like.

It is only of late years that we have appreciated the possibilities of cottons. The French dressmakers have helped to teach us, and now many of the most effective toilettes are so-called cottons, often cotton voiles, marquisesettes, toile de jouy or nets.

The most predominant note of the season in cotton goods is again borders, as I said in speaking of the chiffons, silks, etc. It is more noticeable here than anywhere. The simplest ones show two or three inch borders, while the handsome ones of toile de jouy are bewitching in the richness of color combinations more beautiful than ever before.

One of the prettiest of the simple borders I saw was a swiss. At the bottom was a four or five inch border of plain pink swiss; next came eight or ten inches of white ground with pink dots, the balance of the space of all white dots on the white ground. This came in all colors, being especially swagger in black and white.

A new idea was a very fine white voile, dotted with white beads showing a border of a rich paisely pattern rioting in color. I could write for hours and still leave much unsaid. The cotton voiles are more popular than ever; their weaving qualities combined with the

sheerness of the weave assures a long life of popularity for them. The new ones sometimes show delightful borders of the predominating color, and again a wide fine check shows embroidered figures scattered over the surface. The embroidered swisses are much more varied in color and design than ever before and are justly popular.

New Materials for Spring

I was privileged last week to have an early view of the line of suitings as well as chiffons, foulards and the hundred and one other beautiful dress fabrics which have been brought over to one of the large New York shops by their European buyers who have just returned. Many of these will not be shown for a month or more, and I'll wager that in less than a month after that there won't be many of them left.

I shall begin with the suitings, which are mostly conservatively smart, with here and there a brilliant Scotch mixture, for, as I said in the fall, Paris has taken to the tweed and Scotch mixtures, and such popular houses as Poiret, Bernard and Callôt show several models of them; although I must confess that in my mind the smartest suits of these mixtures are the plain—absolutely plain—man-tailored suits, the design of which rarely changes from season to season unless it is in the length of the coat or the width of the skirt. But it takes a tailor who is a past master at his business to get the best possible results from a suit of such severe plainness. I know of one man on the Avenue who makes almost nothing else, but it is only the years of patient hard work that have brought him this well merited praise.

And I started in to tell you of materials! Well, there is nothing more popular than whipcord serges—no relation to diagonals except that the whipcords do run diagonally across the fabric, but these are stanch, closely woven twilled cords, which speak wonderfully for the dust shedding and wearing qualities of the fabric. A close rival is the very fine French serge. Both of these come in various blues and in black, the smartest

being that same very dark midnight blue so successful last year. Paquin always encourages blue serge, as do Francis, Bernard and even Poiret, the extremist. This season Paquin seems especially keen on the twilled varieties, which means that they will be successful without a doubt.

Drecol is favoring a very smart serge with a hairline stripe of green, brown, black or white, having a border of quarter-inch stripes running horizontally. A month or so ago I would have said that borders were pretty much on the wane, but instead I find them more popular than ever in a hundred new styles and beautiful color combinations. But the successful tailor or dressmaker rarely makes these up in the obvious manner, having the stripe running round the bottom (except in the case of wide flowered border chiffons or the like), usually preferring to use the border as a trimming, frequently to edge tunic or sleeves.

One of the smartest fabrics I saw, although necessitating a careful treatment, was a black and white effect, a white ground with narrow black stripes interspersed with an occasional wider one. Redfern is showing suits of it, and it is wonderfully *chic*.

But the really new fabric which promises to be the rage is a serge etamine, something like a wool voile in effect if you can picture it. It comes in plain and fancy effects, and Paquin, Devillet, Bernard and Poiret are all enthusiastic over it. One of the prettiest designs of it is a dark blue with an eighth-inch white silk stripe set quite far apart and broken every inch or so by tiny black cross stripes. This comes in several good shades and is splendid for a useful frock. There is an all-wool marquisette shown by Drecol and Doucet, undoubtedly two of the smartest and most refined houses, that comes in a wide range of colors and is also decidedly new. Then I nearly forgot one of the most effective, a plain fabric, say black with its under side a narrow black and white stripe. Think of its possibilities as it comes in a wide range of colors.

Wraps

All the brilliant tones, coral, American beauty, brilliant greens and blues, are shown in the new wraps. Two of the prettiest I saw were both in an American beauty shade. The first of chiffon, wonderfully draped in a picturesquely graceful fashion, was edged with a three-inch band of velvet of the same shade, which gave it the needed weight. The other of charmeuse was a capelike affair having its collar delicately embroidered in silver thread. A new idea is a knee-depth capelike affair which is shown in fancy pailletted and beaded chiffons and is fine to throw over one's shoulders instead of a scarf.

Suits

Only a few suits have come over so far but these are for the most part delightful little models, simple and charming. Almost all of them had tiny collars of lace, embroidery or a combination of both, which gave a pretty feminine touch, as any delicate hand work will do. Again collar and cuffs on a blue serge were of a rose basket weave cloth. Still prettier was a Paquin model of twilled serge with a tiny collar of a foulard similar to the chintzlike ones I just described. This one was a soft blue with rose-colored flowers. The sleeves of the coat, which were three-quarter length, showed the bell-like widening at the bottom, of which Mme. Paquin is so fond, and were finished along their outer edge by a wide band of black silk braid which continued right up to the collar as the sleeves were cut in one with the body of the coat, and yet not giving the usual kimono effect. This suit had a smart vest of the foulard and was delicately braided in black. I liked it immensely for its lines and good color combination. The coat was hip length with the high waist line in back still quite a feature in the spring models.

Another very good one showed insets of brilliant Chinese embroidery and sulphur-colored satin which toned splendidly with the serge.

By the way, they were not all serge, but I mentioned these two as especially

good models possible of successful treatment in many other fabrics.

The tailor shop in which I saw them, is well known for its advanced models which are suitable for American trade, not exaggerated in any way. The proprietor goes abroad several times in the season, and in this way an almost steady stream of models comes over, which argues for the "up-to-dateness" of the establishment. I saw here a smart black and white stripe, white ground with narrow black stripes, which was well cut and the stripes planned to give the best lines.

Dress Fabrics

Borders and more borders, satins and crêpes, new foulards and prettier chiffons than ever are shown in the new dress fabrics. The prettiest chiffons I saw were in white with inch-wide satin stripes about six inches apart. These stripes were in every conceivable shade, none more effective than the black and white. A new idea in border chiffons shows a colored ground, pink, blue, yellow, green, etc., a relief from the usual white. Others have wide satin borders that smarten them.

Speaking of borders, a splendid idea was shown me. A white foulard with black coin dots had an accompanying border, single width, of a brilliant Persian, red, green, and black, showing about ten or more inches of the coin dotted foulard at its edge. One could buy only as much of the border as was needed, which should prove a successful innovation.

Quite the prettiest foulards I saw were deliciously old-fashioned, chintzlike designs evidently originating from the old wooden block patterns—tiny little figures of two or three bright colors primly arranged in rows. These suggested demure frocks with the soft muslin fichu, a new note, seen on a few fall and winter frocks and apt to be used extensively this spring and summer. Margaine La Croix, Doucet, Agnes and Poiret already show models of these.

A new satin suitable for suits and gowns, but especially intended for unlined wraps, shows black on one side

and such smart shades as purple, empire green, sulphur, etc., on the reverse. The newest examples of wool satin are so pliable that one can crush them in the hand. They nevertheless have body enough to tailor beautifully and come in a wide range of exquisite shades. Satin suits promise to be smarter than ever for spring.

For wraps I saw some regal *crêpe égyptienne* with handsome gold threads running through and showing more plainly in the brocaded pattern. These were also surprisingly soft, illustrating another point gained in the weaver's art.

Frocks

Still mostly for Southern wear, these thin things are nevertheless a wise purchase for summer use, too, for the models are decidedly new and will last the season through without a doubt. In one of the smartest little Avenue shops that has recently enjoyed quite a vogue among the best people, I saw several splendid models, simple yet swagger, and effective in their simplicity. Many of the linen models showed the smart new *tablier* in back which is an outcome of the separate train I spoke of on evening frocks. This separate panel hangs loosely to the bottom of the skirt, hides the placket and is a modern touch. One sees notes of brilliant colors on most of the frocks—a black and white dotted one was oddly trimmed with a wide *pekiné* stripe and piped with purple.

A very successful model of *marquise*, trimmed with a wide band of eyelet embroidery which circled the skirt and ran up on either side forming the sleeves of the waist, had an empire green satin belt which ran through a square crocheted buckle.

I saw here a very serviceable as well as smart frock for general wear in a blue and white striped silk—hair-line white stripe on the blue—that showed an empire green vest and yoke and a tiny string-colored lace *jabot*. In another shop a dark blue satin utility frock had a collar and cuffs of hemstitched blue and white chiffon which were very striking.

This was almost ridiculously cheap considering its effectiveness.

New Blouses

A shop well known for its exclusive models showed me several blouses that were quite new in effect. One of a butter-colored pongee combined with a self-toned all-over lace of the fine Irish crochet type, which was odd and very smart, had touches of black and the most beautiful yoke and undersleeves of fine valenciennes lace put together with quarter-inch bands of hemstitched white chiffon. It is just such touches as this which give an air of exclusive elegance to a blouse or costume and distinguish it from the more usual ones seen in the shops.

Another new idea is that of veiling, colored hand-embroidered mulls with handsomely embroidered black chiffon. A pretty example of this showed the under blouse of a beautiful coral shade.

But quite the smartest touch of all—and I have seen them nowhere else in town—are the delicate chiffon blouses embroidered in tiny round balls, which seem at a first glance to be made of wood but are in reality of tightly wound thread. These are considerably smaller than a pea in size and are worked in a design done in floss silk. They have a *chic* all their own and promise entirely new developments, besides being a relief from the eternal beads.

Hats

One new hat idea I have noticed in several shops is a crown of one color straw, the brim another. The smartest example of this new note was bound South last week but is to be copied in an Avenue shop. It was the ever popular rolling sailor, moderate in size and with a round crown beautifully in proportion. The rim was in a cool green, a hemp I think, the crown white. The rim was bound with a very smart narrow green-and-white blocked band, which encircled the crown, finishing in a stiff flat bow at one side—absolutely no other trimming, but indescribably smart and possible of

an endless variety of combinations. In a small shop they showed me several very good early models. One of a rough burnt straw quite yellow in tone had a facing of empire green and a well tied green velvet bow posed at the side back. Velvet encircled the rather low round crown, and the brim turned smartly up in front.

A splendid mid-season hat shown here was of white malinette covered with black maline lace—an insertion about six inches wide running diagonally across the hat and, forming the huge airy bow at the back. Every second hat has a delicate bow posed either on the top of the crown or at the side back. Another good black and white one was a small round affair sitting low on the head, the brim turning sharply up four or five inches all around, something of a toreador shape. This had a black straw brim faced with velvet and a white crown, its sole trimming an arrangement of crochet cords and ball buttons forming an ornament in front. This shape like the rolling sailor is almost universally becoming, and this particular hat was wonderfully *chic*.

In another shop I saw a rolling sailor, black underneath, rough straw, and white on top—a smart satin band laid in perpendicular folds surrounded the low crown and conventional satin ornaments finished it at either side. Another good one here was a simple conservative mushroom shape, black underneath, string color on top. The band around the medium high-bound crown and the two earlike wings posed at the side back were made of string color lace about one-half inch wide put on a little full. It gave an odd and delicate effect decidedly attractive.

A Few Novelties

In one of those fascinating little shops I spoke of last month, I found some real novelties. The first was a fine Colonial spool rack copied from one at present in a museum. A round mahogany stand with a tiny drawer has several rods at the top which resemble shortened hat pins—these support a fat little pin cush-

ion at the top surrounded by a mahogany rim through which these rods are run. There is space on each rod for two spools and space on the pin cushion for plenty of pins. Quaint long-handled baskets like the old-fashioned garden baskets are cretonne-lined and pocketed, and the result is a delightfully graceful sewing basket quite different from any others on the market. The chintzes used are the beautiful hand-blocked ones of ancient pattern.

One of the present day fads is the lingerie sachet which lies at the foot of one's bed and holds the night robe. Almost every fashionable bedroom has one and they are a graceful feminine fancy as well as a useful adjunct. In this shop they show the prettiest ones I have seen—heart-shaped, embroidered and delicately inset with lace over a pale color, or white with a beautiful bow and a pretty satin rose at one side of the top.

A pretty brocade box bound in gimp is a baby's traveling box containing wash cloths, brushes, powder box and several other accessories including a rattle for His Royal Highness. This is a good suggestion for a baby's gift—a relief from the usual line of presents.

A New Tooth Powder

Do you spill half of the tooth powder in the bowl when you endeavor to put a little on the brush? I do, so this little device appealed to me at once. It is a powder which comes in a metal box. The lower part of the box is filled with the powder; above is a trough fastened in the top, large enough to accommodate as much powder as you would use at one time and hold it exposed where you may apply the damp brush directly to it. The sides of the trough are vertical and perforated below the level of the top so that when the box is inverted the powder may sift from the main receptacle into the trough. A hinged cover containing a sealing plate fits close down over the trough sealing it perfectly. A slight pressure on a spring which holds the cover down releases the lid, and it opens like a watch case. The powder is especially good, as it contains no pumice

or anything injurious to the teeth. The little device is gaining no little headway here in town, for it has been an aggravation to all users of a tooth powder to waste the greater portion of it.

Toilet Preparations

So many people seem interested in preparations to reduce flesh on some special part of the body—often the dreaded double chin—that I wish to mention a preparation that I know to be perfectly harmless and which has accomplished some truly marvelous results in cases brought to my attention. It is an ointment specially prepared and intended to be rubbed on the flesh to be reduced. It should be well kneaded into the flesh at night and allowed to remain until morning, when a tonic is used to remove it. These preparations are gaining quite a reputation because of their purity and absolute harmlessness, which cannot be said of many.

Sachet Powder

Good sachet, which is really rather hard to find, is sold in a little shop in town in violet and heliotrope, which are both standard odors much in demand for bureau drawers, closets, etc. Many people send to this little place from all parts of the country for the sachet as it is especially strong and fragrant. A very fine toilet water in those two odors is a fitting accompaniment.

Spring Note Paper

Some of the new styles in note paper are delightful, soft in tone and smooth in texture, with a very fine pattern woven in the fabric and hardly discernible at a cursory glance. The idea came from abroad and opens up a wide field with a host of attractive variations. At one of the smart Avenue stationers they are showing some delicately beautiful examples of this new paper in soft pale shades as well as the ever popular white. Quite the most effective pattern was a stripe shown in both narrow and wide varieties, running horizontally and ver-

tically, the latter being the more effective. In this shop they make a specialty of individual monograms, by which I mean that they do not follow any distinct type of monogram as many of the shops do but fit the idea to the individual requirements of each group of letters, insuring decidedly picturesque and unusual results.

New Jewelry Ideas

Hat pins are being used much smaller than formerly, in fact as small as possible, and delicate in workmanship. Pearls and brilliants are as popular as any other stones, but inconspicuous designs seem most in demand.

New slides for the velvet neck bands are being shown in very delicate designs. A new idea suggestive of spring is the use of maline instead of velvet. New pins for the hair are intended for wear with the new close fitting coiffure. They have three loops of brilliants, and ribbon may be run under them if a hair bandeau is liked.

Some very pretty lorgnette chains I saw recently closely resemble the more expensive diamond and pearl ones. These are of silver platinum which never tarnishes, and the indestructible pearls used assure their wearing quality.

The Beauty of Japanese Work

We are gradually appreciating the beautiful restraint which is so much a feature of Japanese interior decoration. In fact, one of the most charming interiors I have seen recently showed decided Japanese influence. It was a reception room simply furnished in delicate white cane furniture. The white walls showed panels of artistic Japanese decoration, and one of the few ornaments was a lamp, which induced me to write this little paragraph. It was of white porcelain called Iyo ware, an odd but gracefully formed vase with a plain square gray rice paper shade (they sometimes come hand-decorated in delicate colors) set in black. At either side of the vase were the familiar elephants' heads and rings. I found that these

lamps come from one of the best Oriental houses in town and in many graceful shapes, copies no doubt from some of the more wonderful porcelains, treasured possessions of the establishment. They are so chastely simple but perfect in outline and so satisfying in their restful ivory tone that I can imagine no more suitable lamp for a room that is in constant use.

I discovered in this shop, besides a most wonderful collection of prints and many truly gorgeous ornaments, rugs, draperies and the like—a real treasure-trove—a splendid assortment of mandarin coats and kimonos, much more beautiful than those usually shown here in town. But that is easily explained, for the proprietors of the shop show so few of the usual commercial instincts, seeming rather to seek out and display the most beautiful treasures of the Orient, that one gets the impression of a studio rather than a shop.

Earrings

There seems to be no end to the length of earrings; they just grow and grow, but they are none the less attractive and everyone is wearing them. A shape that has become more popular than ever is the plain gold hoop, slightly wider at the top than at the bottom, rechristened the "harvest moon." These are shown in many sizes, but the most suitable seems to be about the size of a ten-cent piece or a little larger. These hoops are shown in jet and stones. In the latter effect I saw a pair of diamonds and sapphires, the latter showing only in the broad part at the bottom; the result very smart and quite effective.

For the Traveler

A leather-covered book just issued by one of the leading shops in town is absolutely unique in its completeness. I have seen many journals, diaries, "My Trip Abroad," and the like which I presume are familiar to everyone who remembers his first trip abroad; but most of these are attractive only as far as the cover, the rest of the book usually

consisting of blank pages which I have no doubt some travelers do fill out, but I'm willing to wager most do not.

This book I have reference to, however, is full of really valuable information, and also leaves some blank pages for one's impressions of the places visited.

The first few pages are devoted to the signals used on board, of places visited, with space for date and comments.

Then follows information regarding the weather, latitude and longitude, foreign coins and their approximate value, mail time (that is, the length of time it takes for mail to get to the principal cities of the world from New York), also the distances of these cities from New York and the difference in time, how to keep time on board ship, information about the sea, the watches, points of the compass, directions for playing shuffleboard and something about the ship's log. Then come a few blank pages for the itinerary, hotels patronized and people met. Following this are a great many pages.

At the back of the book is an index for addresses, and last but not least a most complete map having all the prominent steamship and railroad lines marked out and each country and its possessions shown in a single color. I think that a book of this sort is one of the few really acceptable gifts for a prospective traveler; it is complete and stops right there.

A New Pencil

Quite a unique device, that of an electric light in a pencil, which throws a clear, strong light downward, enabling one to write in a perfectly dark room, is a recent novelty. The pencil is rather large but not bulky, and it works much like a pocket flash—and by the way, it can be used as a flash. It is a new idea and seems to me very practical. I can imagine a hundred uses for it, for instance, in a dark theater when one so often wants a glimpse of the program.

A Cereal Set

Most people are familiar with the individual coffee, sugar and cream sets in

silver and silver deposit ware. To accompany one of the latter, or as a separate breakfast tray accessory, is a new cereal set introduced by one of the Avenue silversmiths. At the bottom is a good-sized bowl to hold the cereal; inverted over this, acting as a cover, is the individual dish. Fitting in the circular ridge in the center of this is a little fat pitcher, and on top of this fits the sugar bowl. The pattern is a beautiful one, done on Lenox pottery, which is a delicate cream color.

New Ties for Men

One of the best men's apparel shops is featuring some new ties which promise to be the vogue for spring. They call them "lace," but they are nearer to the old grenadine bow ties in material than anything else I can think of. They have that same openwork effect and are delightfully soft and pliable. Two-tone color combinations in these are very attractive and resemble the mottled effects so popular in knitted ties. But the more lacelike patterns are newer and quite different from anything we have seen for some time.

Knitted ties hold their own wonderfully, and a new idea is shown in this shop that I haven't seen elsewhere, a diagonal weave—not the diagonal stripe seen on every hand, and very attractive, too, but a self-colored pattern knitted in diagonally, which is an acceptable relief and quite effective.

At this same shop they are showing a new lightweight material for summer dinner jackets that is splendid in every way. It is not unlike a serge in feeling; that is, it is cool and wiry and very thin but strong. In fact, it is one of the few successful lightweight materials for dinner suits that I have seen, and I presume there will be a great demand for it. I can see no perceptible difference in the new plates sent over from London to illustrate the English ideas in spring and summer suits, unless it is the use of four instead of three patch pockets on

the popular flannel suits. The fourth pocket, the same size as the breast pocket of course, is exactly opposite it naturally, on the right side, and while not by any means a new idea, is nevertheless bidding for popularity.

These flannel suits made with the large patch pockets are the most comfortable suits for morning wear, and the house I have reference to does a tremendous business in them.

New Records

The records this month are exceptionally good—that is, there are so many good ones that it is hard to make a choice.

An orchestral selection that appealed to me was the "La Fiancée Waltz" of Waldteufel. There is a strongly marked rhythm to this played in perfect time for dancing, which makes it a very wise selection, for so many people occasionally depend upon the phonograph for dancing in the summer. A Spanish song, "La Mandolinata," and an Italian one, "A Granada," sung by De Gogorza, are both charming, also largely because of their rhythm. Then, too, Riccardo Martin's rendering of "Siegmond's Liebeslied," from "Die Walküre," and "Addio alla Madre" (Turiddu's Farewell to His Mother), from "Cavalleria," are both delightfully artistic. "Drink to Me Only With Thine Eyes," ever popular with music lovers, is well rendered by McCormack.

One of the very best Kreisler records I have heard is made up of two selections, Schubert's "Moment Musicale" and a delightful little number "Tambourin," by Rameau, which has been revised by Kreisler to suit his own particular style, thus adding much to its effectiveness.

Kipling's "Gunga Din," famous the world over, is given by Clifton Crawford very clearly and in his well known manner. Mr. Crawford is well known for his Kipling recitations and is one of the best of present day comedians.



WHAT ABOUT YOUR INVESTMENTS ?

By THE ADMINISTRATOR

Modes in investments, broadly speaking, are subject of change, not quite so radical perhaps, but still as distinct as in fashions. We see this in the stock markets. Now it is rubbers that have the call, now coppers, again steels or oils. In the bond world, naturally, the changing modes are less vagrant but quite marked.

An example is to be found in the remarkable growth during the past decade in the popularity of public service corporation bonds, "utilities" as they are generally termed. What might strike the casual observer as strange is that the investment world should ever have ignored the opportunities for safe and profitable undertakings in this field, where there is a catering to actual and continuous public necessity. Perhaps in former years not as much care was taken in the security offered. Bond jobbing may have gone along with stock jobbing. Certainly there was never as much care generally exercised as in later years in the actual conduct of the business. Efficiency in public utility operations has been brought down to a scientific basis. The best brains of an important element in the engineering world have been commandeered in behalf of individual companies and especially syndicates and groups of capital that have found profitable employment in such exploitations.

If judgment is used in selecting the scene of such investments, considering the size and character and prospects of the community; if in addition the franchises are attractive, the capitalization conservative, the management aggressive but careful and honest, and the financial backing trustworthy, the buyer of utilities will not go astray and will be able to net $4\frac{3}{4}$ to $5\frac{1}{4}$ % on such securities of the very first grade and up to nearly 6%, in some instances, on bonds that are not unattractive otherwise. Needless to state, these returns are attractive considering the nature of the security.

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firm wishing to present substantial securities to the readers
of SMART SET; this
paper reaches a large number
of stock and bond owners.*

QUERIES AND ANSWERS

("The Administrator" undertakes to answer as he may be able suitable questions relating to securities. Name and address should accompany communications, but they will not be used for publication.)

Chicago Railways Co., 1st mtg. 5s.—"Capital," New York City, will find these bonds attractive as a first mortgage on 445 miles of electric railway in Chicago with a franchise in which the city is virtually a partner, having placed a minimum valuation on the property of nearly \$30,800,000 above all these bonds outstanding. They can be bought to net around 5.20% and are due February 1, 1927.

Lehigh Valley R. R. Co., gen. con. mtge. gold 4s due 2003.—For his purpose, L. F. D., Phila., will find these bonds most suitable. Subject to some \$70,000,000 underlying bonds, secured by mortgage on the entire property, assets and franchises of a company that is paying over \$6,000,000 a year in dividends on its stock, an amount equivalent to five times the interest charges on this issue. Tax free in Pennsylvania and listed on the New York and Philadelphia exchanges. At current prices, yield is about 4.10%.

Federal Light and Traction pref.—This 6% cumulative stock is paying dividends and netting about 7½% at going prices, and should appeal to "Business Man," Balto., for the investment of a portion of his surplus funds. The company, which controls a dozen utilities in various small Western cities, is in strong hands and well managed with gross and net earnings gaining ground. A new stock and dealt in privately in New York.

Pennsylvania R. R.—"Philadelphia" will recall that this stock has almost invariably fallen sharply following an addition to its capital as recently announced. In the long run I have no doubt it will make up such ground as it may lose now. The present dividend I regard as reasonably safe.

American Smelting & Refining Co., pref.—The recent financing by the American Smelters Securities Co. really adds to the fixed charges of the parent company which has guaranteed principal and dividends on the \$30,000,000, 5% pref. B stock of its subsidiary. W. M. O., Morristown, N. J., could doubtless find a safer security yielding as much on the capital required.

Good School Bond.—Borough of Waynesburg, Pa., school 4s, due 1928, optional 1920, are to be purchased at a price to yield 4.20% and should be a suitable investment for Mrs. C. K. A., New York.

E. T. C., Brooklyn.—The stock you mention is not listed and the company makes no public statements worth printing. I would not invest in it unless I were prepared to lose.

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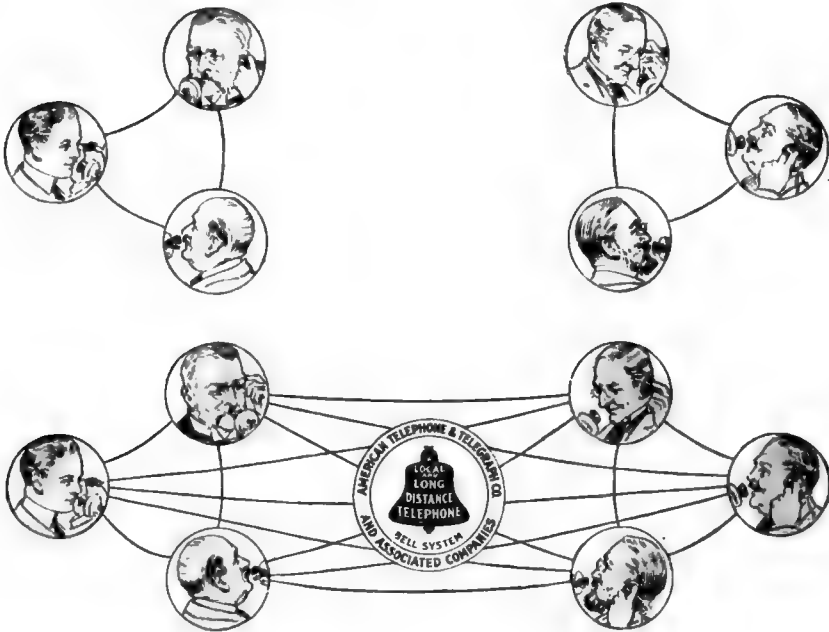
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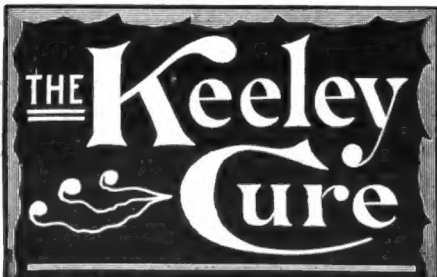
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